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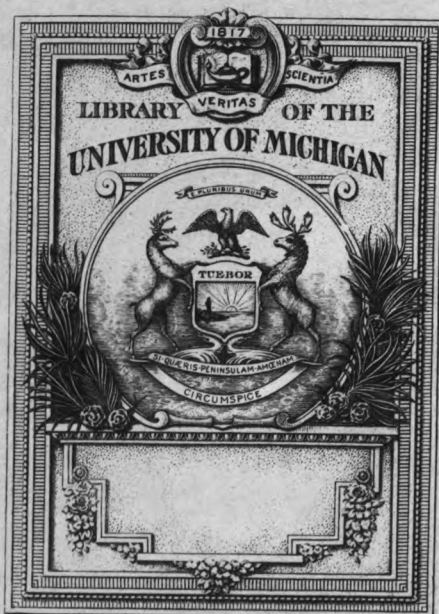
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**THE CRAZY FOOL ʘ**  
**DONALD OGDEN STEWART**



By DONALD OGDEN STEWART

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*A Parody Outline of History*

*Perfect Behavior*

*Aunt Polly's Story of Mankind*

*Mr. and Mrs. Haddock Abroad*

*The Crazy Fool*

# THE CRAZY FOOL

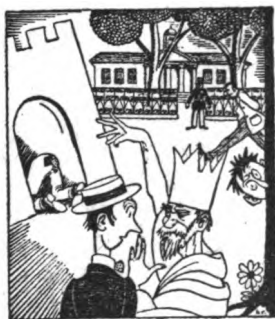
*by*

DONALD OGDEN STEWART

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DECORATIONS BY  
HERB ROTH



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To  
ROBERT BENCHLEY



## **AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

**The story about the horse who sits on eggs is not mine. I wish it were. Also the horse.**

**D, O. S.**



## THE CRAZY FOOL





## THE CRAZY FOOL

This is a story about a crazy fool named Charlie Hatch who inherited an insane asylum from his uncle.

Napoleon was in the insane asylum, and Edison, and a lady who part of the time was Venus and part of the time Mrs. B. C. Tompkins, of Hartford.

When he inherited the asylum, Charlie was 23 years old and in love, which made his total age 14 including depreciation and money for carfare and marbles.

The object of his affection was named Judith Pratt. She was one of the Boston Pratts of which there are a great many. Judith was a typical Pratt if ever there was one.

She was very beautiful, though, and very

## *The Crazy Fool*

calm, and everything about her was in exactly the right proportion so that at Miss Walker's School she had been voted "the golden mean" and a good big kiss.

Judith's father (Mr. Pratt) was president of the Pratt National Bank, for which Charlie had gone to work after he had been expelled from Harvard and, at the time this story opens, Charlie had been an employee of Mr. Pratt's bank just eleven months, twenty-nine days and forty-five minutes and it was now nine forty-five on the morning of Wednesday, May the twenty-second.

The Pratt bank building was very impressive. It rose beautifully to the height of twenty-one stories, of which the first four were occupied by the bank itself. On pushing through the tall, heavy glass doors from the street, one beheld countless uniformed and caged attendants, tiptoeing busily at 4, 5 and 6 per cent among massive, marble pillars. The atmosphere was that of a safe, conserva-

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tive cathedral—a cathedral of commerce. One was awed into silence; one took off one's hat.

At the rear, in what would correspond to the nave of the cathedral, was the room in which Charlie was supposed to work.

"Has any one here seen Hatch?" asked Mr. Wilberforce, the chief clerk, entering this room where twelve young clerks were bent over twelve new adding machines.

"You mean Charlie Hatch?" asked one of the clerks, stepping forward. "He who is said to be madly in love with the daughter of Mr. Pratt, our employer?"

"Yes," replied the chief clerk. "And I fear that there is trouble in store for that young man, for here it is nine forty-five on the morning of Wednesday, May the twenty-second, and he is not yet at work and, as you know, this is the morning Mr. Pratt comes to inspect our department."

"Tell us," asked another clerk, stepping

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forward, "do you think he will really ever marry Judith, our employer's only daughter?"

"Sh-sh!" came the warning. "Here he comes now."

At that several of the clerks began humming, "For he's a jolly good fellow," and in rushed Charlie, quite out of breath.

"Hello, boys!" he said. "Am I late?" and he tossed his cap onto a hook.

"Hello, Charlie," they all cried. "Hurrah—it's Charlie, come to work," and greetings were exchanged.

"Hatch," said Mr. Wilberforce, stepping forward, "where have you been since Monday?"

"In jail, sir," replied Charlie, with a smile.

"In jail?" cried the clerks, and they crowded forward around Charlie. "Oh, tell us about it."

"Mr. Pratt will be very angry," said Mr. Wilberforce. "And Miss Judith, too, I fear."

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Isn't she wonderful!" exclaimed Charlie.  
"Boys, I'm the happiest man in the world."

"Yes," said the chief clerk, "but Mr. Pratt was asking for you all day yesterday and as you know this is the morning he comes to visit our department and I think I hear him coming now."

"I'll hide," said Charlie. "Don't give me away, boys."

"Not us," cried the clerks, and they leaped back to their adding machines and began adding, and Mr. Wilberforce leaped back to his subtracting machine and began subtracting, and then the outer doors swung slowly open and Mr. Pratt entered.

"Good morning, Mr. Pratt," said Mr. Wilberforce, bowing.

"Did I hear whistling in here?" asked Mr. Pratt. It was one of Mr. Pratt's great fears that some day some one would whistle in his bank.

"No, sir," replied Mr. Wilberforce.

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"Are you *sure*?" demanded Mr. Pratt and he fixed on the unhappy clerk those keen gray eyes which seemed to look right through him.

"No, sir," said Mr. Wilberforce, growing pale.

"Then you *aren't* sure?" asked Mr. Pratt and the top of his bald head became a little pink like sunrise over Lake Louise.

"Yes, sir," stammered Mr. Wilberforce. "I'm quite sure. Boys!" he demanded. "Did any of you hear whistling?"

"No, sir," replied the boys in unison.

"No, sir, *what*?" asked Mr. Wilberforce.

"No, sir, Mr. *Pratt*," they replied.

"Well, that's good," said Mr. Pratt, mopping his brow. "And now, Mr. Wilberforce—are your men ready for inspection?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Wilberforce, "ready and willing," and he fell in behind Mr. Pratt while the president walked slowly along the line of young men standing beside their adding machines.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"What's *your* name?" asked Mr. Pratt, stopping suddenly in front of a blond clerk who blushed furiously.

"Pratt, sir," stammered the young man.

"Don't be silly," said Mr. Pratt. "My name's Pratt. What's yours?"

"Pratt, sir," insisted the young man.

"That's very odd," said Mr. Pratt, and he made a note, "very odd," on the back of an envelope.

"And what's *your* name?" he asked the next man.

"Pratt, sir," was the reply.

"Wilberforce," said Mr. Pratt, turning crimson, "what's the meaning of this?"

"It's very unfortunate," said Mr. Wilberforce, trembling. "I've tried very hard, too," and he looked almost ready to cry, for Mr. Wilberforce has been with the bank sixteen going on seventeen years next August.

"Wilberforce," said Mr. Pratt, "you're an ass," and with an appropriate gesture he em-



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phasized that point before he passed on to the next man.

"What's your—" he began, and then he remembered and checked himself.

"What have you in your mouth?" he asked.

The clerk blushed and tried to swallow.

"Give it to me," said the president, holding out his hand. "Give it to Mr. Pratt, immediately."

"Gum," said Mr. Pratt. "I thought so. How many times a day must I——"

Just then the telephone rang.

"It's for you, Mr. Pratt," said Mr. Wilberforce. The executive went to the telephone.

"Pratt National Bank—Mr. Pratt, the president, speaking," he said. There was a pause. "I see—" and after a little while he said again, "I see."

Finally he did some calculating on a pad with a gold pencil, at the end of which he said, speaking very distinctly, "We'll take a

## *The Crazy Fool*

million and a half at 93¼. Yes," and hung up the receiver.

"Now," said Mr. Pratt. "Where were we?"

"We were having inspection," said Mr. Wilberforce, after looking at his Organization Chart and Daily Schedule. "Wednesday—ten to ten-thirty—inspection," and he proudly showed Mr. Pratt the neat blue pencil check mark to prove his point.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Pratt. "And now, men, I want you to remember that never before in the history of our country have there been such golden opportunities as now exist for intelligent young men in the banking business."

"Hurrah!" cried the young men.

"Intelligent young men," continued Mr. Pratt, "have never before in the history of our country had such golden opportunities in the banking business as now——"

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Exist," supplied Mr. Wilberforce, consulting last week's notes.

"Hurrah," cried the young men.

"Such golden opportunities for intelligent young men in the banking business as now exist——"

"Hurrah," cried the young men.

"I wasn't finished," said Mr. Pratt, so he finished. "And before I leave," he continued, "I wish to tell you the story of the boy who became president of the United States. It seems there were two Jews——"

"Please, sir," interrupted one of the clerks, raising his hand.

"Yes?" said Mr. Wilberforce.

"May I go out?"

"Why, Beaumont!" said Mr. Wilberforce, "you went out just half an hour ago."

"Yes, sir," said Beaumont, "but——"

"Oh, all right," said Mr. Wilberforce, biting his lip, and Beaumont tiptoed out.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Beaumont is one of our newer boys," explained Mr. Wilberforce.

"I see," said Mr. Pratt, and he smiled sympathetically as though to say, "We're all human." In fact, he said it.

"We're all human," said Mr. Pratt.

"We're only young once," replied Mr. Wilberforce.

"Aren't we?" said Mr. Pratt, agreeably. "But to continue. Once upon a time, there was a poor young boy who wished one day to become president of the United States——"

"Please, sir?" asked another young clerk, holding up his hand.

"Yes?" said Mr. Wilberforce.

"May I go out?" asked the young clerk.

"If you feel you must," said Mr. Wilberforce, and the young man, feeling that he must, went out.

"And this poor boy worked very hard," continued Mr. Pratt, "and was very industrious and very thrifty——"

## *The Crazy Fool*

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## *The Crazy Fool*

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"Yes?" said Mr. Wilberforce.

"May I go out?" asked the young clerk.

"If you feel you must," said Mr. Wilberforce, and the young man, feeling that he must, went out.

"And this poor boy worked very hard," continued Mr. Pratt, "and was very industrious and very thrifty——"

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"Please, sir?" asked still a third young clerk.

"What is it?" demanded Mr. Wilberforce, testily.

"May I go out?"

"Look here, Wilberforce," snapped Mr. Pratt, "is this a bank or is it a—a——"

"It's a bank," replied Mr. Wilberforce, quickly.

"Well, then," said Mr. Pratt, "see that you treat it like a bank."

At that moment, there came the sound of a sneeze from behind Mr. Wilberforce's desk. Mr. Pratt looked at Mr. Wilberforce.

"Some one," he said, "sneezed."

"It's probably only the mice," said Mr. Wilberforce and he added, nervously, "You know how mice are."

"Well, then—close that window," said Mr. Pratt, benevolently, but before a clerk had had time to obey his instructions, there came another sneeze!

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"That's not a mouse," said Mr. Pratt. "I know mice. Come clean, Wilberforce."

"In truth, sir," said Charlie Hatch, stepping out from where he had been hiding, "it is not a mouse. It is I."

"Well, Hatch," said Mr. Pratt, frowning. "And where have you been since Monday, may I ask?"

"You may ask, sir," replied Charlie, "and I will tell you. I have been in jail."

Mr. Pratt's jaw dropped.

"Hatch," said Mr. Pratt, "you're discharged."

"Oh, Mr. Pratt," said Mr. Wilberforce and all the clerks.

"Silence," cried Mr. Pratt. "Wilberforce—take a memo."

Mr. Wilberforce got his memo notebook and prepared to write. "Subject—Finance—General—Banks and Banking—Organization—Miscellaneous—Discharges—Hatch, Charles—discharge of—" began Mr. Pratt.



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"What's the matter, father?" asked an inquiring feminine voice.

It was Judith Pratt who had just dropped in to cash a check and she looked very cool and lovely in an appropriate suit of black and white checks with a sailor hat of blue straw to match.

"Read her the memo, Wilberforce," commanded Mr. Pratt, and Wilberforce obeyed.

Judith looked at Charlie and then at her father. The room grew very quiet.

"Is that true?" asked Judith of Charlie and Charlie nodded slowly.

"Then you haven't made good," she said, "and the year is up today."

Judith slowly drew off her glove and the diamond ring from her finger.

"There," she said, handing it to Charlie, and, amid a tragic silence, she turned on her heel and walked proudly forward to the window marked "Paying—P to Z."

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Mr. Pratt stepped up to Charlie, who was pale as death.

"I'm sorry, Charles," he said, and held out his hand. "But you knew the conditions. Business is business."

"Thank you, sir," said Charlie and Mr. Pratt left.

"Are you sure it's the same ring?" asked Mr. Wilberforce, sixteen years of banking experience momentarily getting the better of his finer emotions.

Charlie only smiled pluckily.

"Goodbye, boys," he said. "Goodbye, Mr. Wilberforce," and he turned to leave. "I sail for South America this afternoon to join the Foreign Legion."

"Is there a Mr. Hatch here—a Mr. Charles Hatch?" asked an unexpected voice and Charlie stopped.

"What can you want," he said, "of he who was that unfortunate young man?"

"Are you Mr. Hatch?" asked the stranger

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—an elderly gentleman, with kindly blue eyes and a gray mustache. He was dressed in a light suit of tweed, and wore a straw hat with a sporty blue and red Racquet Club band.

"Alas," replied Charlie. "I am he."

"Your uncle is dead," said the old man. 4

"But I haven't got any uncle," said Charlie.

"Yes, you have," replied the old man persistently.

"How is he?" asked Charlie, numbly.

"He's dead," said the old man. "And you're his sole heir." 6

"His sole heir," cried Charlie, his face brightening. "Then I can marry Judith."

"Not so fast," said the gentleman. "There are conditions——"

"What conditions?" demanded Charlie indignantly. "That's just like Uncle—what was his name?"

"Well, in the first place," replied the other, "the bequest is yours only on condition that you make good."

The Crazy Fool

"Oh, my God!" cried Charlie. "Why does everybody always want me to make good? What do I have to do *this* time?"

"You have to reorganize your uncle's insane asylum," replied the stranger, "and put it on a paying basis."

"I beg your pardon?" asked Charlie, politely.

"You see," explained the old man, "your uncle spent his whole life developing this asylum. It was his dream. He started with only a few dollars—his bare hands—and one lunatic. Men called him a fool—an idealist—but he shrugged his shoulders and went on alone. He poured all his energy—all his time—into it—and at last came success."

"What sort of success, for example?" asked Charlie, but the old man held up his hand for silence.

"In later years," he continued, "your uncle was not able to keep up with modern energy—modern inventions. The asylum needed

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new life—new ‘pep.’ Toward the end of his life, he began to realize this—and just before he died, he made his will naming you his sole heir on condition that you devote your time to the reorganization and modernizing of his life work. Your uncle,” added the old gentleman, “was always extremely interested in you.”

“Dear old uncle,” said Charlie. “I’ll miss him.”

The gentleman laughed. “My name’s King,” he said. “Horace King. A family name. I was your uncle’s best friend,” he explained. “His advisor—and his chief executor.”

Charlie was thoughtful for a moment.

“I was going to South America this afternoon,” he said.

“Why?” asked the old man.

“To join the Foreign Legion,” replied Charlie. “Is there a Foreign Legion there?”

“I don’t think so,” replied the old man,

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looking through his pockets. "A policeman could probably tell us, though. Perhaps this gentleman could get us a policeman," and he indicated Mr. Wilberforce with a smile. "Any kind would do."

Mr. Wilberforce looked quite dismayed.

"I would have to ask for one," he said, "via the line of organization and then it would have to be O.K.'d by all of the vice-presidents. And I'm not sure at all," he added, "that Mr. Pratt would like it. Are you a depositor, Mr. King?"

Mr. King shook his head.

"Perhaps if you would care to open an account—" suggested Mr. Wilberforce.

"I might go to South America later," interrupted Charlie, "after I had reorganized everything. But then that wouldn't be the same thing."

"Lots of things," said Mr. King, attempting to balance his hat on the end of his cane, "aren't the same thing. For example—well,

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I can't think of any good example now. I think my memory is getting worse every day. Sometimes I can't even remember my own name."

"It's King," said Mr. Wilberforce.

"Thank you," said Mr. King. "So it is."

"I took a course in memory once," said Mr. Wilberforce. "I've taken courses in practically everything—that's why I'm pulling down a good salary and have a home and money in the bank."

"Then," said Mr. King, "perhaps you could tell me why this young gentleman wants to go to South America."

"I want to go to South America to show her," said Charlie.

"To show who what?" asked Mr. King as his hat rolled off the cane and onto the marble floor. "*Whom* what, I mean."

"Show Judith," replied Charlie, "that I *can* make good."

"Tell me about her," said Mr. King, and

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the lights in the bank began to go out one by one.

Mr. King and Mr. Wilberforce stepped to one side while the twelve clerks formed a background behind Charlie.

"Yes," they said, stretching out their hands, "tell us."

"Well," said Charlie, coming forward, "I will tell you," and he took a deep breath and began:

"She is the most wonderful girl in the world," he said, "and I love her very much."

"He loves her very much," repeated the clerks.

"And she promised to be my wife in one year on condition that I make good."

"Make good," echoed the clerks.

"Today," said Charlie, with a gesture of despair, "the year was over and I'm now not her lover and so," he said, "I am going away forever."

"It's customary," interrupted Mr. Wilber-



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force, "to have a last waltz, isn't it?" and he started to look through the files as Charlie with bowed head began to walk toward the door.

"Stop," cried Mr. King. "Wait. All of you. Don't you know what year this is?"

"It's 1928," said Mr. Wilberforce, consulting his calendar, "and the tide rises at 7:14 and sets at 11:41."

"Precisely," said Mr. King. "Because it's leap year."

"Leap year," they all cried, looking at each other inquiringly.

"Yes," said Mr. King, triumphantly to Charlie, "and therefore your year isn't over until tomorrow at midnight."

"But," said Charlie, "how can I make good in one day? I've just been discharged."

Mr. King stretched out his hand.

"Come with me," he said, "to your uncle's asylum and make good there."

Charlie hesitated.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Would Mr. Pratt agree?" he asked.

"I'll open an account at this bank," said Mr. King. "Immediately."

Charlie grasped Mr. King's hand.

"Done," he cried. "I'll go with you and reorganize my uncle's place before midnight tomorrow."

"Good," said Mr. King, consulting his watch. "We leave on the twelve forty-five this noon. We can just make it."

"Goodbye boys," cried Charlie, "and good luck."

Mr. King shook hands with Mr. Wilberforce and followed quickly after.

"I'll bet he doesn't do it," said Mr. Wilberforce, sharpening a pencil. "He doesn't know bookkeeping, for one thing."

"Of course, he'll do it," cried the boys, and they returned to their adding machines, each one generously hoping that perhaps his neighbor's chance to make good would come next.

But a young man with a pale, sallow com-

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## *The Crazy Fool*

plexion and cigarette-stained fingers stepped out from behind a pillar where he had been hiding. He shook his fist at the door through which Charlie had disappeared.

"We'll *see* if you make good, my fine fellow," he snarled, and with a hasty look around to see if any one was looking, he lighted another cigarette and walked rapidly away.

It was Jack Butterfield, Charlie's rival for the hand of Judith and who of late had been seen more than once in the company of Labor Agitators. He was a man who would stop at nothing and frequently did.

The twelve forty-five, however, left at twelve forty-five.

"We're off!" cried Charlie with all the eager excited assurance of eternal Youth in the face of the Great Adventure. The old gentleman only smiled—the wise smile of Age—Age mellowed and saddened by Experience.

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Five minutes later Charlie again looked out of the window.

"If I'm not too inquisitive," he said, "may I ask a question?"

"My name is King," said the old gentleman, "Horace King. You may ask me anything."

"Well, in the first place," said Charlie, "isn't that the same man out there we saw back at the station?"

Mr. King looked out.

"Yes," he said, "I believe it is."

Charlie took out an envelope and did some figuring on the back.

"Well, then," he said, at last, "either he is moving—or we're not."

"I'll ask him," said the old gentleman affably and he tried to raise the window.

"Here, I'll help you," said Charlie, and together they succeeded in getting their hands very dirty.

"It won't raise," said Charlie.

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"Ah, my boy," said the old man, patiently, "maybe it's *us* who won't *lower*. Did you even stop to think of that?"

"No," replied Charlie, so he and the old man lowered.

"Maybe if I had a diamond," said Mr. King, "I could cut a hole in the glass and get out."

Just then an employee in overalls walked through the car, carrying a pail and a mop.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. King, "but have you a diamond?"

The man stared dumbly.

"Pardonnez-moi," said Charlie quickly, "mais est-ce que vous avez une diamant——"

"It's masculine, I think," said Mr. King.

"Isn't he, though," said Charlie. "And what a mustache!"

"I meant the word," explained Mr. King; "*diamant*—it's '*un diamant*' if I'm not too mistaken."

## *The Crazy Fool*

"*Un diamant*," repeated Charlie to the man but with no better result.

"Bitte," began Mr. King. "Haben Sie vielleicht——"

The man turned and left the car.

"In my time," said Mr. King, "employees were taught courtesy."

"And French and dancing," said Charlie. "And ladies were ladies and did the gavotte," and he pretended to execute a few quaint steps in the aisle. "Will you join me?"

"Ah, me," sighed Mr. King. "The good old days."

"Maybe," said Charlie, "if we don't let the window know we are trying to open it, we can catch it unawares."

"All right," said Mr. King and they sat down and pretended to go to sleep. Suddenly Charlie leaped up and grabbed the window and after a tremendous struggle forced it open.

"See," he said, triumphantly, "I told you."



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Mr. King, however, still had his eyes closed and did not answer.

"That's a wonderful piece of acting," said Charlie and he held a mirror in front of Mr. King's mouth to see if by any chance he were dead.

Mr. King soon opened his eyes and looked out the window.

"That's that same man," he said, somewhat petulantly. "I wish he would go away," and he called to the man.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but can you tell me what station this is?"

"New York," replied the man.

"New York," repeated Mr. King with a puzzled look. "I see. Thank you."

"He turned to Charlie. "We left New York at twelve forty-five," he said.

"I know it," said Charlie. "I was there," and he turned to the man. "We left New York at twelve forty-five," he said.

"Did you?" replied the man.

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"Yes, we 'did you,'" said Charlie, somewhat irritated.

"Careful," said Mr. King. "Let me talk to him. Are you sure," he said, presently, "that this is New York? Are you acquainted here?"

The man put his fingers to his mouth and whistled shrilly. "Hey, Bill!" he called.

Bill came, wiping his hands on a piece of waste.

"Here's a couple of guys," said the man, "want to know if this is New York."

Bill looked at Charlie and Mr. King, then tossed the waste onto the next track.

"Come on, Eddie," he said. "We've got to finish that truck on thirteen."

Bill and Eddie left to finish the truck on thirteen. Charlie looked at Mr. King. Then they picked up their baggage and walked out of the car by the front end.

"I guess they didn't take this car," said Charlie, somewhat crestfallen.

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"You'll learn, my boy," said Mr. King, wisely, "not to count on anything."

Charlie was looking through a time table.

"That's not the right railroad," said Mr. King.

"I know it," said Charlie, "but it's the only time table I've ever had. We were Southerners," he added, "and proud."

"Time tables are like women," said Mr. King. "The more you somethin' or other them, the more they—I forget the exact words."

"How's the tune go?" asked Charlie. "Maybe I can help you out."

"There used to be a two-thirteen," said Mr. King, "but I can't remember where it was a two-thirteen from. My memory is getting worse every day."

"New York?" suggested Charles. "Chicago?"

"Maybe," replied Mr. King. "Anyway,  
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we can ask. It never does any harm to ask, my boy."

So they picked up their bags and walked back through the gate to the Information Bureau.

"Is there a two-thirteen?" asked Mr. King, politely, but the information man was talking on the telephone and did not answer.

"It's your turn to ask a question now," said Mr. King to Charlie when the man had finished. So Charlie asked a question.

The man reached under the counter, handed Charlie a purple time table and answered a call on another telephone.

"Now I'll ask one," said Mr. King, so the next time the man seemed to be free, Mr. King asked one.

"What great English statesman," he began, "is sometimes referred to as——"

Mr. King was handed a time table—a red and black one.

"Dear, dear," he said. "We don't seem to

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be getting anywhere. And it gets dark early around here, too."

"It's the fault of our colleges," said Charlie. "College graduates don't know anything."

"When I was at college," said Mr. King, "a young man had to work," and he glared at the smooth-faced youngster behind the counter.

"I tell you what," suggested Charlie. "Let's get all the time tables and go over in a corner and look for a two-thirteen—and the first one who finds it can sit next the window all the way."

So, with a little patience, they collected a large assortment of time tables and retired to a cold marble bench on which Mr. King spread out a newspaper before he sat down.

"You'll understand," he explained to Charlie, "when you're older."

"Oh, go on, tell me now," said Charlie, but Mr. King wisely refused.

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"Here's a two-thirteen," he cried, "I get the seat."

"Let's see," said Charlie.

"The only trouble is," he said, "that that train goes to St. Louis."

"I've been to St. Louis," said Mr. King. "I was there in '84—no, '85—I can remember just as well. We got there about two in the afternoon—phew, wasn't it hot—and I kept saying——"

"Here's a train," interrupted Charlie, "which might do."

"You mustn't hesitate to interrupt me," said Mr. King, "any time. I'm old and I get to talking and I know it doesn't interest any one, so don't you hesitate to cut right in. So that afternoon in St. Louis, I kept saying, 'My, but I wish it would rain,' and the man I was with, John Bradshaw——"

"Do you think this is our train?" asked Charlie, holding up the time table.

"That's right—you just interrupt whenever

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you want," said Mr. King. "Well, John Bradshaw—he was from Cleveland, then, although he came originally from Albany and I had known him for several years—oh, ever since he and I were youngsters——"

"All I want to know is," asked Charlie, "if you think this is our train," and he pointed to a column on the forty-second page.

"That's what I like to see," said Mr. King, taking out his spectacles, "a young man who isn't afraid to ask questions. So John Bradshaw said, 'I bet it doesn't rain before night,' and I said, 'I bet it does'—and along about five-thirty, it began to look as if it might rain and sure enough, just about six o'clock, it began to rain and it rained all night. Now, isn't that about as dull a story as you ever heard?"

"It's pretty dull," said Charlie. "And yet it's probably true."

"Well, as a matter of fact," said Mr. King,

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"it isn't true. I never knew any John Bradshaw."

"Do you mean to say," asked Charlie, "that you made that all up out of your own head?"

Mr. King smiled. "Most of it," he said. "The part about the rain I got from watching rain."

"With an imagination like that," said Charlie, "you ought to write books."

"I wrote a book," said Mr. King.

"I bet you did," said Charlie, "and I bet I've read it a hundred times without knowing it."

"The book's not so bad," said Mr. King. "It's got more of a plot."

"More of a plot than *what*?" asked Charlie.

"Than the story that I just told," replied Mr. King.

"About John Bradshaw?" asked Charlie.

"Yes," replied the old man, "I told that story more or less just for the dialogue—and the character study."



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"The dialogue was a knockout," said Charlie, "and that reminds me—I'm going over and find out the truth about our train."

"The truth never hurt any one," said Mr. King.

"Now you sit right here," said Charlie, "and be quiet, and Charlie will be back as quick as you can say Jack Robinson."

"Jack Robinson," said Mr. King.

"You've got to shut your eyes," said Charlie, "and count up to a hundred."

"But when I shut my eyes," protested Mr. King, "I go to sleep."

"Not if you drink coffee," said Charlie. "I'll bring you some."

"And a cheese sandwich," added the old man, but Charlie had gone. So Mr. King shut his eyes and when Charlie came back, he was asleep.

"This is very discouraging," said Charlie. "I'll never make good and marry Judith if this nice old gentleman is going to go to sleep

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all the time," and he woke Mr. King up by laying him flat on the bench, loosening his collar and working his arms up and down and backward and forward until artificial respiration began.

"Where am I?" asked Mr. King, opening his eyes.

"In St. Louis," replied Charlie, "and it is just beginning to rain and we'll have to hurry if we want to catch the two-thirteen. My name's Bradshaw."

"Where's my cheese sandwich?" asked Mr. King.

"We haven't time," replied Charlie.

"Time and tide—" began Mr. King, but Charlie picked up the bags and started for the gate.

"You promised me a cheese sandwich," said Mr. King, reproachfully, as he hurried along beside the young man.

"Later," said Charlie.

"But I want it *now*," said Mr. King.

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"Later—Charlie said '*later.*'"

"But——"

"Do you want Charlie to give you a good sock in the eye?"

Mr. King was silent and they reached the gates.

"Have you got the tickets?" asked Charlie.

Mr. King began fumbling through his pockets.

"Maybe you swallowed them," suggested the gate keeper, sarcastically.

Mr. King stopped and considered.

"No," he said at last, "I don't think I did. That was a hat check I swallowed."

"He puts everything in his mouth," explained Charlie.

"I was only kidding," said the gate man. "Hurry up."

"Maybe they dropped down inside your trousers," said Charlie. "You might take them off and look."

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"You can't do that here," warned the gate keeper, instantly.

"Why not?" asked Charlie, looking around for a "No Taking Off of Trousers" sign.

"Say, are you two trying to kid me?" asked the gate man.

"Dear me, no," exclaimed Charlie. "Not you."

"Here they are," said Mr. King. "They were on my forehead all the time." And after the tickets had been indignantly punched, they passed through the gates and onto the train.

"Are you sure this train stops at our station?" asked Charlie nervously, after the bags had been swung up onto the rack. "I can't afford to make any mistakes at the start."

"There's only one way to be sure," replied Mr. King, "and that's the right way," and so together they walked through the coach, out onto the platform and up to where the engine was standing.

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"That's quite an engine you've got there," remarked Mr. King, looking up pleasantly at the engineer and resting one hand on the cab.

"Mustn't touch!" cautioned Charlie.

The engineer regarded Mr. King in silence.

"Yes, sir," went on the old gentleman, "that's certainly quite an engine."

"Yeh?" said the engineer.

"Tell me," said Mr. King, "and I don't want to seem inquisitive—but are you connected with this road?"

"I'm the engineer," replied the other.

"Ah," said Mr. King. "I thought so. The engineer—well, well," and he turned to Charlie with a smile. "He says he's the engineer."

Charlie raised his hat, deferentially.

"And this is certainly quite an engine," went on Mr. King. "Yes, sir—quite an engine. I suppose these engines go in and out of the station pretty regularly?"

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There was no answer.

"I should imagine they did," said Mr. King.  
"Yes, sir—pretty regularly. On schedules, probably—or am I presuming too much?"

"They have regular schedules, if that's what you mean," said the engineer.

"Well, now, that's very interesting," said Mr. King and he turned once more to Charlie. "They have regular schedules, he says."

"And I suppose," went on Mr. King, "that you have a perfectly definite list of places where you are expected to stop—of course, I'm not a railroad man in any sense of the word—but that is what I would suppose."

There was no response from the cab.

"They tell me," continued Mr. King, "that one of these trains used to stop at a place called Lodge Junction—I think that was the name——"

"This train stops at Lodge Junction, if that's what you want to know," said the engineer.

"Thank you," said Mr. King. "That's just

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what I wanted to know. Come, Charles," and they walked triumphantly back to their seats.

"Yes, sir," explained Mr. King. "You can get anything you wish if you only go about it in the right way."

"Well, I wish this train would start," said Charlie, looking at his watch.

"It will," said Mr. King, "with time and patience," and at that, the train gave a couple of tugs and started.

"See?" said Mr. King, smiling wisely at the impatient youth. "When you're as old as I am—" but just then the train stopped suddenly with a jerk and Charlie's golf bag crashed down from the rack onto Mr. King's straw hat.

"I didn't need to have brought my extra putter," said Charlie, apologetically.

"That's perfectly all right," said Mr. King, rubbing his head. "That's what I get for being selfish. I should have given *you* that seat."

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For the first hour or so, Charlie and Mr. King gazed out of the window, more or less in silence.

"It's sort of an unusual place you're going to," said Mr. King at last. "The people may strike you as a little—well, different—but I think you'll learn to enjoy them."

"If they're at all like you," replied Charlie, "I will."

"Well, they're like me," said Mr. King, pleased, "and they're not—that's quite a paradox, isn't it?" he said. "I'll have to remember that."

Charlie leaned back in his seat and began to think about Judith.

"It must be great to be married," he murmured, but Mr. King did not answer so Charlie turned to the lady sitting alone across the aisle.

"It must be great to be married," he said.

She was reading but looked up with a smile. There was something unusual about her, too—



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and something quite interesting. Beautiful, well dressed, veiled and with a curious bird-like voice.

"It's terrible to be married," she said, with a faint shrug of one small shoulder.

"Why, you're crazy," replied Charlie. "And, besides, you don't know Judith."

"There are lots of people I don't know," she said. "I don't know you, for example."

"I'm just old Charlie Hatch," he explained. "I was born in a log cabin and then I became a surveyor and many stories are told about my honesty and my marksmanship until one day I came across a copy of Shakespeare in the pocket of an old Indian chief and that made me want to go to college. So I walked twenty-one miles to the little old schoolhouse but it wasn't there and just then a kind old gentleman, driving by in his automobile, saw me splitting rails in my coonskin cap and asked me if this was the road to New York and I said, 'No.' 'A bright lad,' he said, turn-

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ing to his wife, who was driving. 'How would you like to go to college?' 'Fine,' I replied, so they laughed and drove on, and sometimes, as I sit around the fire with my wife and kiddies I think I am the happier, don't you?"

"I think you are very nice," said the lady. "And now I will tell you who I am. I was a poor little girl born in a tenement and my mother and father used to be drunk all the time and beat me so I grew up to be sweet and pure and beautiful and one day when the Prince of Wales knocked a polo ball into our alley he saw me and fell in love with me and married me and we lived happily ever after and now I think I shall return to my book," and with another intriguing smile, she began to read and Charlie noticed that it was a French book written in French.

Suddenly, as though a thought had just come to her, she wrote something on a piece of paper, got up and walked past Charlie to

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the front of the car and out, and when Charlie looked down he saw that the slip of paper was in his lap.

"There is a man in the third seat back of you," he read, "who has been annoying me. If he follows me out of the car, and you are an American gentleman, you will take care of him for me."

"Say, listen—" said Charlie, but she had disappeared, so he slowly and cautiously turned around to look.

The gentleman in the third seat back of him was one of the largest men Charlie had ever seen. And as he looked, the fellow slowly got up out of his seat and started forward.

When he was opposite Charlie, Charlie stood up.

"Take that, you cad," he said, and he aimed a blow at the man's jaw but missed.

"Down where ah come from," said Charlie, "they string 'em up for less than that," and he swung and missed again.

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"Say, listen," said Charlie. "How can I knock you down if you don't hold still?"

"All right," said the man and he stood still and Charlie knocked him down.

"Now *you* hold still," said the stranger, getting up, "and I'll knock *you* down."

"What for?" asked Charlie.

"I don't know," said the man. "I've never been down South," and with that he knocked Charlie down.

"Now what do we do?" he asked, picking Charlie up.

"I don't know," confessed Charlie. "How do you feel?"

"My jaw hurts a little," said the man.

"So does mine," said Charlie. "I tell you what—if you apologize to the lady, my honor will be satisfied."

"All right," said the man. "I'm sort of shy with ladies though. Who is she?"

"Why, don't you know?" and Charlie looked at the big man angrily.

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"No. I was just going up to get a drink of water," explained the man.

"Well," said Charlie, "you want to be careful about that in the future."

"Yes, sir," said the man.

Charlie relented, held out his hand and smiled. "No hard feelings, stranger," he said and the two men shook hands.

"Now can I get my drink of water?" asked the man.

"You sure can," said Charlie, heartily, and so the stranger passed forward out of his life and so, apparently, had the interesting lady.

After the second hour, the train seemed to become considerable of a local—at least, it made a great many unnecessary stops for such a nice train, and Charlie impatiently woke Mr. King up and suggested that they go forward again and ask the engineer if there was anything they could do about it.

"He's probably just lonely," said Charlie, as the train once more came to a halt. "Or

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maybe it's his wind. Too many cigarettes are very harmful in excess."

"Perhaps he ate something which didn't agree with him," said Mr. King. "I wonder what it could have been?"

"Egg plant," suggested Charlie. "That doesn't go with some things at all."

"I've got some bicarbonate of soda in my bag," said Mr. King and Charlie took down the suitcase and opened it.

"The only drawback," said Charlie, "is that it might offend him to have us comparative strangers climb up into his cab with some bicarbonate, especially if he is just renting the cab for the afternoon."

"Not if you do it in the right way," said Mr. King. "Leave it to me."

So Mr. King dug around in his bag until he found some notepaper and then he sat down and began to write.

"Would you say, 'Dear Engineer'?" he asked, "or 'Dear Mr. Engineer'?"

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"‘Dear Mr. Engineer,’" replied Charlie, "unless it is a relative, or a very dear friend."

"I don't think he's a relative," said Mr. King, "most of our family were professional men," so he wrote, "Dear Mr. Engineer," and stopped.

"Unless," he added thoughtfully, "it is Cousin Lemuel. Cousin Lemuel was sort of the black sheep of the family—he eloped with an actress his sophomore year at Columbia. It might just possibly be Cousin Lemuel and he was always very sensitive," so he crossed out the "Mr." and wrote "Dear Engineer," and then added, apologetically "(If I may call you so)."

"There," he said, and waited for an inspiration.

"‘In reply to yours of even date,’" suggested Charlie.

Mr. King shook his head.

"Too formal," he said, "and, besides, there wasn't any ‘yours of even date.’"

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"It's just a business form," said Charlie. "I learned it in the bank."

The two men were silent in the face of what seemed an insurmountable difficulty. Charlie at last took out a pencil and wrote something on the back of an envelope. "Here," and he read: "'I suppose you are bothered with letters like this all the time but I have always been a great admirer of your work and I just couldn't refrain from writing to tell you how much I enjoy the way you handle that engine and if you ever need any bicarbonate of soda, I hope you will let me be the first to know about it.'"

Mr. King shook his head.

"You forgot to ask him for a photograph," he said, "and, besides, those letters are always answered by the engineer's mother or his secretary."

Charlie chewed the pencil disconsolately.

"No," said Mr. King. "I think it would probably be better to start with something a



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little less stereotyped—a little more personal,” and after a long interval, he began to write.

“‘It is very pleasant here now,’” he read, as he went along, “‘with just the right amount of tang in the air, and I often think of you up there in that hot cab and wish you were here.’”

The train came to a stop.

“‘Although quite warm at noon,’” continued Mr. King, “‘the nights are always cool and Thursday we actually slept between blankets. Think of that!’”

“Now for the body of the letter,” said Mr. King.

“‘As I sit at my window and look out, I see—’” The train started and Mr. King looked out.

“Oh, good heavens!” he cried. “This is our station,” and he slammed the bag shut and jumped up. Charlie grabbed everything in sight and they fled down the aisle and off the moving train.

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"Yes, this is it," said Mr. King, panting somewhat. "This is certainly it." And they started back toward the station.

"Wait for me, please," cried a voice behind them and they discovered a lady running along the tracks. It was Charlie's friend—the nice one across the aisle who had fled from the car so unexpectedly.

"Hello, there," said Charlie. "It's Nell come back. See, gran'pa—it's our Nell. Where did you come from?"

"That train," she gasped. "It was the only way I could get away from him."

"Oh, I fixed *him* all right," said Charlie, modestly looking at his knuckles. "Only it wasn't him."

The lady laughed.

"I know it," she said. "And you were a dear."

"This is Mr. King," said Charlie, "a member of the famous class of '78."

Mr. King removed his hat gallantly.

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"Are you traveling alone?" he asked.

The lady glanced hastily behind her.

"I hope so," she said. "My name is Barbee—  
—I'm Mrs. Barbee."

"Of course," said Mr. King. "Now I remember perfectly."

"You don't," said the lady.

"No," said Mr. King, "I don't," and he offered the lady his arm, "unless," he added, "it is Mrs. Roger Barbee."

The lady looked at him quickly.

"You know my husband?"

Mr. King shook his head.

"I've heard of him," he replied.

The lady laughed somewhat mirthlessly.

"A lot of people have," she said.

"Won't you join us?" asked Mr. King.  
"Don't bother to change. Just come as you are."

"May I?" asked the lady and the three, arm in arm, turned toward the station.

It all seemed very strange. There was a

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station but no one was apparently in it or on the platform. And, stranger still, smoke was coming out of the windows and through the cracks in the door—quite a bit of smoke.

"I'm just a young man," said Charlie, "and I don't want to seem critical—but I do think the station's on fire."

"No offense at all," said Mr. King, heartily. "We'll have a look," and they walked over to the station.

"Yes," said Mr. King, looking in through the windows. "It's on fire, all right."

"I'm glad I asked," said Charlie, and he started to open one of the doors.

"I wouldn't go through there," said Mr. King, smiling patiently. "That's the ladies' entrance."

"Sorry," said Charlie, blushing and looking around to see if Mrs. Barbee had noticed.

"That's perfectly all right," said she, with a smile.

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"Hey—Jim!" called Mr. King, knocking on another of the doors. "Hey—Jim!"

Charlie looked through the window, and saw the station agent fast asleep beside his telegraph instrument. Mr. King continued his gentle pounding and finally the agent raised his head and looked up, somewhat indignant at the interruption.

"What do you want?" he asked, rubbing his eyes.

"It's Mr. King, Jim," explained that gentleman.

Jim came to the window and opened it.

"My, it's close in here," he said.

"I think the station is on fire," explained Mr. King.

"So it is," said Jim, and he looked around for a bucket. "Thanks."

"When did you get in?" he asked.

"Just now," said Mr. King. "We came on the train."

"Has the train gone through?" asked the

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station agent, as he began throwing water on the fire.

"Just about five minutes ago," replied Mr. King, so Jim put down his bucket and came out to the station blackboard.

"Here, I'll put out the fire, if you don't mind," offered Charlie.

Jim looked at Charlie a little questioningly.

"This is Mr. Hatch, Jim," explained Mr. King. "A friend of mine. And our very dear friend, Mrs. Barbee."

"Glad to meet you," said Jim. "Go right ahead—always glad to oblige a friend of Mr. King's," so Charlie and Mrs. Barbee picked up the bucket and started to work.

Jim took an eraser and a piece of chalk out of his back pocket and walked over to the board which said "Train Bulletin."

"Was it on time?" he asked Mr. King.

"About eight minutes late," was the reply.

Jim figured for a minute, then wrote down:

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"Train No. 43—From the West—Due at 4:21  
—Will arrive at 4:29."

"There," he said, and then he rubbed it all out. "Anything else?" he asked.

Mr. King considered thoughtfully for a moment.

"The conductor had a big spot on his coat."

"Would you mind," interrupted Charlie, "if I borrowed that fire extinguisher over there?"

"Not a bit," replied Jim. "Help yourself. That's what it's there for."

So Charlie grabbed the extinguisher, and soon the fire was put out where it belonged.

"If you don't mind," said Jim, "I think I'll go back in and finish my nap. We went over to the Fergusons' for some bridge last night," he explained, and he yawned generously and retired.

"Edison is late," remarked Mr. King and he looked at his watch.

"Edison?" asked Mrs. Barbee.

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"He's our inventor," replied Mr. King. "He's invented a taxi. That's what we're waiting for."

Charlie pointed to a street car which had been standing for some time near the station. Ivy was growing gracefully up one side and over the front door.

"We might take that," he suggested.

Mr. King frowned.

"It might irritate Edison if we did," he said, "and I wouldn't irritate him for the world, if I were you. His inventions can be perfectly awful if he takes a dislike to you."

"I want him to like me," said Charlie eagerly. "I want them all to like me. I'm going very slow, at first, you know."

"I'll never forget," continued Mr. King, with a reminiscent smile, "the invention he made for poor dear Mrs. Eggleston."

So they waited for a few minutes longer. Finally, however, Charlie's youthful impa-



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tience to get started on his new job could restrain itself no longer.

"I tell you what," he suggested, "we might take that street car, and then if we see Edison, we can signal him from the car."

Mr. King shrugged his shoulders.

"Where is it we want to go?" Charlie asked.

"To the Lodge," replied Mr. King.  
"But——"

"Well," said Charlie, "I can go over anyway, and see if that car goes near there," and, with Mrs. Barbee, he walked across to where the car was standing.

There didn't seem to be any one on it, but when they had mounted the rear platform, they discovered the conductor and motorman, both middle-aged men, inside, talking to each other on the empty bench.

"Does this car—" began Charlie.

The motorman looked up. "No," he replied.

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"We want to find out," said Mrs. Barbee, "if this car goes near the Lodge."

The conductor looked at the motorman, and they both took off their hats.

"It might," said the conductor.

"You see," explained Charlie, "I'm Charlie Hatch and I've got to get along because my year is up tomorrow at midnight."

The conductor turned to the motorman. "All the world loves a lover," he said. "It's in 'Twelfth Night,' by Shakespeare."

"I didn't take much Shakespeare," said the motorman.

"He's a Princeton man," explained the conductor to Charlie.

"I was Harvard," said Charlie.

"Yeh?" said the motorman, "what class?"

"I would have graduated next year," said Charlie, "but——"

"Oh, I see," said the conductor, and he twirled his Phi Beta Kappa key sympathetically in Charlie's face.

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"My name's Graham," said the motorman, holding out his hand.

"Not *THE* Graham!" exclaimed Charlie. "Not Tom Graham who made the drop-kick!"

The motorman blushed.

"I'm certainly glad to meet you," said Charlie, enthusiastically.

"Well," said the motorman, "it was this way. They had us six to five and there was only two minutes left to play. 'Bull' Hodgkins was playing quarterback and we were on their forty-eight-yard line——"

"The forty-*seven*-yard line," corrected the Phi Beta Kappa man.

"I think it was the forty-eight," insisted the motorman.

"No—the forty-seven."

"How long ago was that?" asked Mrs. Barbee.

"Nineteen years next November thirteenth. So I says to 'Bull': 'For God's sake, "Bull," let me try a kick,' and he says, 'Tom, can you

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do it?' And I says, 'Yes.' So we lined up and the ball came back and the line held and I had a little luck and kicked it over."

"I'll never forget it," said the conductor, "as long as I live. It was the year after I graduated at New Haven—I was back there taking my master's degree before going into the Law School."

"Well," said Mrs. Barbee, gazing admiringly at the shiny brass buttons on the conductor's coat, "you two men have certainly done pretty well in nineteen years."

"Oh, we've just had a little luck," said the motorman, modestly.

"Luck nothing," said she, "it was ability."

"I *was* voted 'Most Apt to Succeed' by my class," said the Yale man, "but, of course, that doesn't mean very much."

"A college education is a great thing," said Charlie.

"You never have such good times after you leave college," said the conductor.

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"I'll say you don't," said the motorman. "Why, I remember one night a bunch of us——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Mrs. Barbee, "but before you begin, could you tell me if this car is going to the Lodge?"

"Sure," said the motorman, and he went outside to the front of the car and changed the sign to read, "To the Lodge."

"We live up there ourselves," said the conductor. "Say, Tom," he added, "tell him about the time you played the Navy."

So Tom told Charlie about the time they played the Navy.

"Did you tell him, Walter," said Tom, "about the party you pulled at Sherry's in Sophomore year—the night you almost got arrested?"

"No, I didn't," said Walter.

So Walter told Charlie about the time he almost got arrested in Sophomore year.

"And, say, Tom," said Walter, "remember

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the night before the second baseball game in 1906—when what-was-his-name got so stewed?"

"Say, that was a night," said Tom, turning to Charlie. "It began at the Nass about three in the afternoon. There was I and Eddie Dillon and Frank Powell and——"

"Excuse me just a minute," interrupted Mrs. Barbee quickly. "I want to speak to that old gentleman over there at the station."

"Certainly," said the motorman. "Frank Powell and Butch Curry and Steve Loftus and we all began throwing Tom Collins into us like nothing at all, and——"

Charlie followed Mrs. Barbee off the car and over to Mr. King.

"Any sign of the taxi?"

"I think that's he coming now," said Mr. King, and he pointed up the road to what looked to Charlie from a distance to resemble nothing more or less than a steam roller, and

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when it came slowly nearer, it turned out to be exactly that, thus proving Butler's law.

"Taxi," called Mr. King, beginning to wave his hand at the gentleman who was piloting the machine behind a long gray beard and a huge cloud of black smoke.

"Taxi!" called Mr. King, louder and louder.

"My God!" said Charlie, "if he doesn't slow down he's going to crash right through the station."

"Edison is quite a joker, at times," replied Mr. King, and Mr. King was right. Without deviating from his course by so much as a gray hair, the old gentleman piloted his chariot into the station, through the station, and out the other side, leaving behind two benches, a news-stand and a gum machine as mute, flat testimony of something.

Out of the wreckage slowly crawled Jim, the station agent, rubbing his head. "Say," he yelled at Edison indignantly, "what's the

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matter with you? Don't you know this is a one-way street?" and he pointed to a sign.

"Taxi!" called Mr. King.

"Where to?" asked the driver.

"The Lodge," replied Mr. King, and they prepared to climb aboard.

"Will you sign for the station, sir?" asked Jim, holding out a pad and a pencil, so Mr. King signed for the station, Edison pulled down his meter flag and they started.

As they crawled along the dusty road, the country through which they were passing seemed adequate. There were trees, bushes, grass, hills, and a sky. The sun began, after a while, to sink a bit, but Charlie, after an argument with Mrs. Barbee, put that down to natural causes. The only thing that really worried him was the taxi meter which already registered three hundred and forty-two dollars, and wasn't even breathing hard.

Mr. King went to sleep at the end of half



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an hour and Edison looked back, then winked at Mrs. Barbee.

"I'm going to step on her," he said. "Hold everything."

They held everything, and Edison stepped on her.

"We're doing over eight now," he whispered delightedly.

"Eight what?" asked Charlie.

"Eight miles an hour," replied the inventor.

"Hit her up to ten," said Mrs. Barbee. "I'm a fool for speed," so Edison prepared to hit her up to ten.

Just then a shot rang out, a shell whizzed over their heads, and a large tree crashed down into the road ahead of them.

Edison chuckled and put on the brakes.

"I thought so," he said.

"What is it?" asked Charlie.

"It's the chairman," he replied. "We're pinched for speeding."

Standing with arms majestically folded, in

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the center of the road ahead, was a large woman in Girl Scout uniform.

"Say, where the hell do you think you're going?" she demanded.

Mr. King woke up, and took off his hat, politely.

"Good afternoon," he said.

"Oh," said she, "it's you, Mr. King! I didn't see you."

"That's perfectly all right," said Mr. King.

The chairman blew her whistle and instantly the forest became alive with merry little Camp Fire Girls, full of woodcraft, and in a twinkling the tree was cleared away and the road unobstructed. The chairman whistled again and the girls disappeared.

"Hurry up," she said to Edison, "you're blocking traffic."

"What traffic?" asked Charlie, innocently looking around.

The chairman glared at him, held up her hand and blew her whistle fiercely.

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"Now we'll have to wait," said Mr. King.

"What for?" asked Charlie.

"She's a traffic cop," explained he, "among other things."

"But there isn't any traffic," objected Charlie.

"I know it," said Mr. King.

In a few minutes the chairman turned, blew once and motioned them forward. As they passed, Mr. King raised his hat but she made no response, and they drove on. Charlie looked back after a few minutes and she was still standing in the center of the road in her Girl Scout uniform, and still directing her invisible traffic.

"I wish she would make up her mind," said Edison.

"About what?" asked Charlie.

"I wish she would make up her mind," said Edison, "as to whether she's a man or a woman."

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"It's quite a problem," said Mr. King, turning to Mrs. Barbee for confirmation.

"Well, she's nearly driving Napoleon crazy," said Edison.

"Is he in love with her?" asked Charlie immediately.

"Yes."

"Poor fellow," said Mrs. Barbee.

"Well," was Mr. King's comment, "she's not very happy herself, poor girl!"

"Sex is a funny thing," said Edison, "but yet, like the cat in the adage, you've got to have it."

"I don't think I know that adage," said Charlie.

"Do you know *any* adages?" asked Edison scornfully.

"I don't think we ought to discuss S-e-x," objected Mr. King, spelling the word out, "in the presence of a l-a-d-y," and he indicated Mrs. Barbee.

"Oh, don't be so old-fashioned," said Edi-

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son, and Mrs. Barbee laughed, but for a while they rode on in silence, each filled with his or her own thoughts.

"How do you like my little car?" asked Edison, at last, giving his steam roller an affectionate pat of pride.

"Oh, I like it," said Mrs. Barbee. "It's quite a novelty."

"There's a great future in steam," said Edison, "a great future."

"No!" exclaimed she.

"I predict," continued Edison, "I predict that before you are much older, there will be steam engines capable of going thirty-five miles an hour——"

Mrs. Barbee shook her head as though she could not comprehend.

"I certainly do," said he, becoming more and more excited. "You can laugh at me if you want to—but remember, young lady, they laughed at Fulton once, and Galileo—and Morse—and so now I just say, 'You wait, you

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fool—you wait'—but they won't listen to me—they won't believe me—they laugh——”

The old gentleman was becoming quite hysterical, but gradually he calmed down and began to smile. Then he looked up into the sky.

“I bet,” he said, “that Fulton and Galileo are enjoying this. That's what comforts me.”

They rode on for a while. Then Edison suddenly turned to Charlie and said, “But I don't need comfort.”

“Of course you don't,” said Charlie, “who does?”

Just then Mr. King reached forward and pulled the whistle cord. A shrill shriek echoed in the valley.

“That's to let Don Quixote know we're coming,” he explained to Mrs. Barbee.

“That's awfully decent of you,” said Charlie. “Is he engaged?”

“Say, listen here, young man,” said Edison.

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"There's a lot of things in this world besides girls."

"Oh, but you don't know Judith!" exclaimed Charlie, "or you wouldn't say that. Why, if I began to tell you about her—only the other night——"

Edison stopped the car, and he and Mr. King and Mrs. Barbee climbed down into the road and began to walk away.

"Oh, all right," said Charlie, with a grin. "I won't talk about her. I just wanted to tell you something she said the other night. We were discussing philosophy and——"

The three groaned and continued their flight, so Charlie stopped and they cautiously returned.

"Think he's safe now?" asked Mr. King, grinning at Mrs. Barbee.

"Oh, come on—get up here," said Charlie. "Wait till you're in love some time."

They climbed aboard, and started, and in

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a little while, Mr. King blew the whistle again.

"There he is," he said, as they turned around a bend in the road. "Don Quixote."

Charlie looked and saw a green meadow, at one end of which stood an old-fashioned windmill. And there, riding rapidly toward it, was a knight in full armor with his lance extended and his head bravely thrown back.

"The picture of romance," said Edison, with a snort.

The knight crashed into the sail of the windmill and stopped, triumphant. Edison laughed out loud.

"I don't think it's so laughable," said Mrs. Barbee, a little resentfully. "It's sort of pathetic. And sort of grand, too."

"He's the modern Don Quixote," explained Mr. King. "He's read the book."

By this time the knight had waved his hand in greeting and ridden over to the fence beside the road.



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"That was great!" exclaimed Mr. King, and Don Quixote blushed under his helmet.

"I didn't dream that any one was looking," he said apologetically, and then he added, "I guess I'm just tilting at windmills, anyway."

"Nonsense," said Mr. King. "And besides, that's what we all do, isn't it?"

The knight was silent. When he looked at Mr. King again, his eyes were full of tears. "You *do* understand, don't you?" he said, and rode off, smiling bravely.

Edison started the car without comment, and they rumbled on.

"We're almost there," said Mr. King, and at that moment, a cannon boomed out.

"That's Napoleon," explained Mr. King. "He'll have his army out to meet us. I telegraphed we were coming."

In the distance, Charlie could see chimneys and a large rambling roof, and then, as they drew nearer, the vine-covered outlines of the Lodge.

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The cannon was being set off at regular intervals and to that sound was suddenly added the blare of music—band music.

"There they come," said Mr. King.

Charlie was getting quite excited. Edison took out a large banner reading, "Official Car," and stretched it across the windshield. Mr. King and Charlie were handed silk hats, which they put on their heads in lieu of a better place.

Down the road came the army, seven strong, headed by a four-piece band. At the front marched Napoleon.

Just before reaching the steam roller, he was seen to be trying to shout some command but the band was playing so loudly that the army did not hear, and the whole procession went marching by, with Napoleon frantically and ineffectively opening and closing his mouth.

"He has an impediment in his speech," ex-

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plained Mr. King as the army disappeared in the distance. "It's most unfortunate."

"Hadn't we better go after them?" asked Charlie.

"They'll be back in a little while," said Mr. King.

And sure enough, the music having died out, again became louder and the procession once more approached. This time Napoleon had much better luck, and the parade halted opposite the guests of honor.

Mr. King and Charlie arose, took off their hats, and bowed. Napoleon saluted, and turned majestically to his men.

"Present—" he said.

"What?" asked one of the men, politely.

"Present—" but just then the cannon boomed out, and the command was lost.

"Stop that cannon," said Napoleon, fretfully. "I hate the damn thing."

"He says he doesn't like that cannon," explained the soldier nearest Napoleon.

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"I think he wants us to present arms, too," said another of the soldiers.

"Do you want us to present arms, sir?" asked the first soldier.

"Yes," said Napoleon, "please," so the men presented arms, and the band played *La Marseillaise*.

"Now what?" whispered Napoleon to his men.

"All yell 'Hurrah,'" suggested a soldier, and they all yelled "hurrah," after which there was another embarrassing pause.

"Play the 'Star Spangled Banner,'" whispered another soldier, and the band obliged with that.

"Can we sit down now?" asked Charlie, but Mr. King shook his head.

"Wait," he said, "I think there's some more to the welcome."

The soldiers and Napoleon were whispering together and finally they once more fell into line.

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"Now, boys," yelled Napoleon, "what's the matter with—I beg your pardon," he said, turning to Charlie, "but what is your name?"

"Hatch," said Charlie.

"What's the matter with Hatch?" cried Napoleon, waving his sword.

"He's all right," yelled the men.

"Who's all right?" cried Napoleon.

There was a silence.

"We've forgotten the name," whispered one of the men.

"Hawkes," replied Napoleon. "Now—who's all right?"

"Hawkes," yelled the men.

Charlie blushed and bowed, the band struck up a tune, the army fell in behind the taxi and the procession moved forward.

They were met at the Lodge gate by another delegation, and the other four pieces of the band and Charlie and Mr. King bowed repeatedly, and Mrs. Barbee waved her handkerchief, and then the bands stopped and a

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distinguished looking gentleman arose in the front porch and held up his hands for silence.

"That's Congressman Burke," explained Mr. King. "It's the address of welcome."

The Congressman cleared his throat and began to speak. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "we are met here today—" and then he stopped and turned deathly pale, at which every one burst into loud cheers of applause, the bands started playing once more, the cannon boomed and the Congressman disappeared.

"That's as far as he ever gets," said Mr. King, applauding vigorously. "It's really quite a shame."

The noise died down once more. The bands became silent, the crowd expectant.

"They want you to reply to the Congressman's address of welcome," whispered Mr. King, so Charlie stood up and bowed.

"My friends," he said, "I can only say in reply that I thank you from the bottom of my

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heart. You make me feel very proud and very happy and I can think of nothing more appropriate at this time than to recite Kipling's 'If,'” and Charlie took a deep breath, threw back his head and began:

“ ‘IF

“ ‘If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you—  
If you can do something or other when all men  
doubt you—  
And yet something—I forget exactly—and  
something, too——’ ”

and he stopped impressively. “But I see you know it,” he said, “so I shall simply end with the ending:

“ ‘Yours is the world and all that’s in it—  
And what is more—you’ll be a Man, my son.’ ”

and he bowed happily and sat down.

The trumpets blared forth, cheers were given and, amid great enthusiasm, Charlie and

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his friends were escorted down from the taxi and into the Lodge, where he found a nice room awaiting him to which he retired very early, in order to be bright and fresh for the next day's strenuous ordeal.

And need I say that that night Charlie's sleep was filled with sweet dreams of Judith? Because it wasn't.

"Now, the first thing to be done," said Charlie to Mr. King the next morning, "is to get some different colored inks so we can prepare an Organization Chart."

They had finished breakfast and were sitting in what had formerly been Charlie's uncle's Study.

"And then," said Charlie, briskly, looking at the desk, "I ought to have some buzzers to press—and a stenographer—and a Daily Schedule."

"How would Mrs. Barbee do?" suggested Mr. King.

"As a Daily Schedule?"



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"No—as a stenographer."

"Can she typewrite?" asked Charlie.

"She looks as though she could do almost anything," replied Mr. King, gazing out of the window.

"King," said Charlie, leaning forward in his chair, and pointing a paper cutter at the old gentleman, "what do you know about that girl? Come clean, now."

"I don't know anything about her," replied Mr. King, "except that I think she is very attractive."

"Humm," said Charlie, and his hand reached unsuccessfully for a button.

"See," he said, "I ought to be able to press something so they could come to take your statement."

"But I haven't made any statement," objected Mr. King.

"Why, you have, too," said Charlie. "You said she was very attractive."

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"Well, isn't she?" asked Mr. King, stroking his gray mustache.

"King," said Charlie, "is this a business office or is it a brothel? Come clean, now."

"It's a business office," said Mr. King, and then he pointed out of the window. "Oh, look, Charlie!" he said, and he and Charlie hopped up to the window and looked. In the center of the long lawn a lady was dancing and almost the first thing one noticed about her was that she didn't have any clothes on.

"Now, listen," said Charlie with a blush. "We've got to organize that," and he looked once more in vain for a button to press.

"How can any of my employees do their best work," he asked, "with *that* going on? What's her name?"

"Mrs. B. F. Tompkins," replied Mr. King, "of Hartford. She's a Pagan."

Charlie ventured another look.

"She doesn't dance very well, does she?" he commented.

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"No," said Mr. King, "and her figure is quite bad, isn't it?" and that was all they said about Mrs. B. F. Tompkins of Hartford.

"Now," said Charlie, returning to his desk, "for our Organization Diagram," and he took out a large piece of paper and inscribed carefully in red ink, "Organization Diagram."

"At the head," said Charlie, "comes us," so he wrote down, in blue ink, "Us." "Then under Us," he continued, "would be the various departments—in green."

"Purple would be better," said Mr. King, and so, after an argument, they compromised on violet, and Charlie ruled some more lines.

"Now," said Charlie, "name some departments."

"Fire Department," suggested Mr. King, and Charlie put that down.

"Miscellaneous," said Mr. King.

"All right," said Charlie, "what else?"

"Isn't that enough?" asked Mr. King.

"Well, then," said Charlie, ruling some

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more lines, "we'll have to have sub-departments."

"Such as——?"

"Sub-department A, sub-department B——"

"Sub-department C," suggested Mr. King.

"That's right," said Charlie.

"Sub-department D."

"Check," said Charlie. "Any others?"

Mr. King thought for several minutes.

"Sub-department E," he suggested.

"King, you're a wonder," said Charlie.

"Now for Department Heads. Whom would you suggest?"

"Napoleon," said Mr. King, "for the Fire Department."

"Fine," said Charlie. "And Edison?"

"Miscellaneous," replied Mr. King, with a chuckle.

"Then there ought to be a special department for 'Christmas Savings.'"

"Yes," said Mr. King, "be sure and put that down."

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"And stamps."

"Yes."

"Anything else?"

"Centennial Celebration."

"That pretty well covers it," said Mr. King.

"When do we start?"

"Immediately," replied Charlie, "and the first thing to do is to have a Conference of Department Heads."

"That will be rather difficult," said Mr. King, "because a lot of them don't get up until noon."

"But, listen," said Charlie. "We've got to get started right away. Here I have this Organization Diagram—and the wheels must start moving."

"All right," said Mr. King.

"I'll send them a memo," said Charlie.

"A what?" asked Mr. King.

"A memo," replied Charlie, and he wrote on a sheet of paper, "Memo—Original."

Then he wrote, "*From—Charles Hatch,*

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Executive—*To*—Department Heads—*Subject*—Conference at 9 A.M.," and underneath that he wrote, "There will be a Conference at 9 A.M.—Signed, Charles Hatch—executive."

"Do you want to add anything?" he asked Mr. King, so Mr. King took the pen and wrote, "P.S.—*Please* come. Everybody is crazy to have you."

"Now," said Charlie, "we'll just put the initials of the various Department Heads at the top, and when they have read it, they can check it off with a blue pencil, thus," and he made a check mark on a piece of paper.

"I see," said Mr. King, "and if they haven't read it, they can check it off with a red pencil, thus," and he made another check mark on another sheet of paper.

"Exactly," said Charlie. "Have a cigar, King," and Mr. King took a cigar.

"Now, where's the Outgoing Memo box?" asked Charlie.

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"There isn't any," said Mr. King apologetically.

"Confound it, King," said Charlie, chewing savagely on his cigar, "that Traction crowd will wipe us out if they get hold of this. They've been hammering Outgoing Memo since Tuesday and the market closes at three."

Charlie looked at his watch and frowned.

"What time is it?" asked Mr. King, desiring to know what time it was.

"Five after nine," Charlie replied, "and no one here yet for that 9 o'clock Conference. By God, I'll break somebody for this."

So once more, Charlie sat down and wrote, "Memo—Original."      "*Subject—Lateness.*" "It has been brought to my attention," wrote Charlie, "that various Department Heads are in the habit of coming late to Conferences. It is estimated last year, that lateness in New York City alone cost the taxpayers something like over a million dollars."

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"A word to the wise—"

THIS MEANS YOU, MR. MAN.

WHAT ABOUT IT?

(Signed) CHARLES HATCH,  
*Executive.*

"That's a fine memo," said Mr. King.

"What will we do with it?"

"File it," replied Charlie, "in the memo file."

"That's right," said Mr. King, "and what fun it's going to be when we get a memo file."

"Do you mean to tell me," said Charlie, crimson with rage, "that there isn't any memo file in this office?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. King, "and last Tuesday we had creamed carrots again."

"King," said Charlie, walking up and down, clasping and unclasping his hands behind his back, "we've got to get started. What will Mr. Pratt say?"

"You might send *him* a memo while you're waiting," suggested Mr. King.



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"What would the subject be?" asked Charlie.

"A noun," replied Mr. King, "unless it follows the verb."

"Couldn't it be anything else?" asked Charlie.

"It could be a clause," replied Mr. King.

Charlie took up his pencil.

"Give me a good clause," he asked.

"Santa Claus," replied Mr. King. "'Santa Claus wishes you a very merry Christmas'—that would be a very nice subject for a memo."

"I mustn't have too many memos," said Charlie, cautiously.

"Three is enough," said Mr. King, "especially in a big city. Lots of people can't afford three."

"I was an only child," said Charlie.

"I had two brothers," said Mr. King, "and three sisters."

Charlie did some rapid figuring.

"That made six of you," he said, after check-

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ing up, "and divide by three—and you get two."

"Two what?" asked Mr. King, anxiously.

"I don't know," replied Charlie. "I wonder what Judith is doing this morning?"

Just then Mrs. Barbee appeared in the doorway.

"Ah—good morning," said Mr. King, advancing graciously to meet her.

Charlie took out his watch.

"You're late again, Miss Abercrombie," he said, and snapped the watch shut.

Mrs. Barbee took off her jacket, hung it up and sat down, with a smile at Mr. King.

"Now," she said, "what's it all about?"

"We're on the verge," replied Mr. King, "of a very important Conference. And you're to be Mr. Hatch's stenographer."

"Oh, that will be wonderful," she exclaimed.

"Can you take dictation?" asked Charlie, brusquely.

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"Yes," she replied.

"Well, can you do *this*?" asked Mr. King, and he leaped up and kicked his heels together before they touched the ground.

"Certainly," she replied, and holding up her skirts, she did.

"Let's get up an act," said Mr. King, enthusiastically. "The Three Flying—what would we call ourselves?"

"Gardenias," suggested Mrs. Barbee. "The Three Flying Gardenias—in Ten Minutes of Grand Opera."

"I can play a saxophone," said Mr. King, "if the conditions are just right."

"I can do a back flip off a spring board," added Charlie, "but we would have to have water for it."

"We could pretend there was water," said Mr. King. "The theater is all illusion, anyway."

"And I can juggle, too," said Charlie, eagerly—and then he stopped. "I am up

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here," he said, "to make good—not to indulge in vaudeville acts. Why, I'm ashamed of you two. Take this letter, Miss Abercrombie."

Mrs. Barbee sat down, crossed her legs, and prepared to write in a notebook.

"Whom is it to?" she asked.

Charlie considered. "It will be sort of a practice letter," he replied, "just to see whether I wish to retain your services," and he began to dictate: " 'Miss Annie E. Oakley, The Parker Air Rifle Company, Camden, Me. Dear Miss Oakley: Yours of May nineteenth at hand and in reply would advise—would advise—' " Charlie stopped.

"No," he said. "Cross that out."

Mrs. Barbee obliged and waited.

"This would be better," and he leaned forward and said, " 'Yours of May nineteenth at hand and in reply would advise—would advise——' "

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"Oh, much better," said Mrs. Barbee, as she wrote it down.

" 'Would advise that we are shipping you, today, collect, our order Number 1509 B your order K 11,391 via freight today, collect, we are shipping you—we are shipping you.' Period.

"New paragraph—'It is our understanding that—that—' " Charlie paused and considered thoughtfully.

"No," he said, "I don't think we had better say anything about that at this time."

"Tomorrow, perhaps," suggested Mrs. Barbee. "Tomorrow is Friday."

"New paragraph— 'With best wishes to you and—and——' "

"Mrs. Coolidge," suggested Mr. King.

" 'I beg to remain, etc., etc.' "

"Now read me what you've got," said Charlie.

Mrs. Barbee read.

"You're crazy," said Charlie. "I didn't say

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that at all. Now I'll try you once more. This will be a sample letter to our customers—sort of a sales letter. Are you ready?"

"You mustn't overwork Mrs. Barbee the first day," said Mr. King. "Perhaps it would be better if we had our Conference now. I'll see whom I can find," and with a bow, he left the room.

Charlie sat for a long time gazing at the top of his desk. "Take a letter, please, Miss Peterson," he said, and he began: "'Dear Judith.'"

"How do you spell it?"

"J-u-d-i-t-h."

"Oh," said Mrs. Barbee. "It's a girl's name."

"It's the name—" began Charlie, and then he stopped.

"Yes?" she said.

"'Dear Judith,' " continued Charlie.

"Is this to be the sales letter?" asked Mrs. Barbee.

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"Say, that's an idea," said Charlie and he began:

DEAR JUDITH:

One minute, please——

This is no CHEAP advertising scheme.

These are FACTS.

Benjamin Franklin came to Philadelphia with only two cents in his pocket.

That's a FACT.

Turtles lay eggs in the sand.

That's another FACT, brother.

BUT—could a turtle go to Philadelphia with only two cents in its pocket?

Or could Benjamin Franklin lay eggs in the sand?

When YOU want something done, YOU go to an EXPERT.

Sincerely yours,

CHARLES HATCH.

"In the interests of National Apple Week."

"That's very appealing," said Mrs. Barbee, "and very fair to your competitors, too."

"Unfair competition," said Charlie, "is

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not good business. Look at Rockefeller."

Mrs. Barbee looked. "That isn't Rockefeller," she said, "that's Mr. King. How many copies of this letter, please?"

"One every hour," replied Charlie, "on the half hour."

"How will she like it?"

"Who?"

"This Miss Judith."

Charlie paused and bit the nail of his thumb. "That's just it," he said, "I don't think she'll like it. She's sort of different that way."

"She is very beautiful?"

"Oh, very," said Charlie. "She carried the daisy chain at Vassar."

"Where did she carry it?" asked Mrs. Barbee.

Charlie laughed. "You foreigners say the strangest things—and yet you've raised a very interesting point. Take a letter, Miss Dowling," and he dictated as follows:

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MY DEAR MISS PRATT:

Several inquiries have come to this office recently in regard to a matter on which I am sure you can enlighten us. What we want to know, Miss Pratt, is—where did you carry the daisy chain to? We have been looking for it all over and President Watson is perfectly furious and we have looked under the stove and in all the drawers and between the leaves of the dictionary you were reading on your last visit, but to no avail. And in five minutes there is going to be a Conference, and the first question they will ask is, "Where is the daisy chain?" and then what will I tell them?

A few more incidents such as these, Miss Pratt, and I shall have to ask you to see Mr. Allerdycce after school.

Let us be fair to the Indian, for after all, he is an American, too.

(Signed) OLD SUBSCRIBER.

"Are you going to send it?" asked Mrs. Barbee when she had finished. Charlie shook his head. "I sent one like that to her once," he said. Mrs. Barbee slowly tore up the dictation.

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There was a moment of silence—then a knock on the door.

"Come in," said Charlie.

Mr. King entered.

"Why did *you* knock?" asked Charlie.

"It's a relic of my old married days," replied Mr. King and his eyes became moist.

"Dear Florence. What a girl *she* was. I can see her now."

"Did you shoot the snake?" asked Charlie.

"I would have."

"There were so many snakes," replied Mr. King. "I felt like St. Patrick."

Mrs. Barbee laughed.

"I don't see what there is to laugh at," said Charlie, and he went over to Mr. King and put his hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry, old pal," he said.

"Thanks, old fellow," said Mr. King. "That's awfully white of you. It's this beastly tropical sun—it gets in your blood."

There was another knock on the door, and

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the sound of some one muttering some kind of an oath.

Mrs. Barbee suddenly grew pale and looked at Mr. King.

"That's his voice," she whispered. "He's found me."

"Who?" asked Charlie.

"My husband," she replied. "The gentleman I wanted you to take care of on the train."

"Shall I do it here?" asked Charlie, eagerly, starting to take off his coat.

She shook her head. "He'd just get up again," she replied, "to spite me."

Mr. King threw the door open.

There stood a tall gentleman, rather handsome, well dressed, with a mean mouth, a silky black mustache and quite drunk.

"Can I interest you in some insurance?" he asked, swaying slightly back and forth.

"Not this morning," said Charlie, firmly.

"Indian rugs—genuine Navajo blankets?" asked the man.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"No," replied Charlie.

"Shaving soap—no brush—you just have to rub it in." •

"Don't you, though," said Mrs. Barbee.

"Oh, hello, dear," he said. "Think of finding you here. How charming," and he finished with a sentence of Italian or something to which she did not reply.

"Here," said Charlie, gruffly, "we speak English here. And if this little lady don't want——"

"*Doesn't* want," corrected the stranger.

"Doesn't want," repeated Charlie and then he stopped. "Now, you've spoiled it," he said.

"I know it. I spoil everything," said the stranger and he looked very penitent.

"Go right ahead," he continued, sitting down on the lounge. "Don't mind me. I'll just sleep here a bit. Go right on with what you were doing."

"We are going to have a Conference," said

## *The Crazy Fool*

Charlie impressively, "an important Conference."

"Oh, dear, another Conference," said Mr. Barbee, lying down and closing his eyes.

"Would you mind," he asked, "lowering that blind? Thank you. And that other one—over there, thanks."

"That makes it dark in here," objected Charlie.

"Doesn't it," said Mr. Barbee, closing his eyes once more. "That's much better."

"You're sure we won't bother you?" asked Charlie, but Mr. Barbee had apparently drifted into slumberland and did not answer.

"I sort of like him," said Charlie. "I think he's very funny."

Mrs. Barbee shot him a quick look.

"Very," she said. "Oh, very."

There was a sound of a bugle outside the door, followed by a couple of whispered commands and the heavy thump of seven muskets grounded.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Napoleon," said Mr. King. "The Conference is about to begin."

Mr. Barbee opened his eyes. "You *would* choose a place like this," he said to his wife.

The bugle blew again.

Mr. Barbee got slowly up and went to the door. "We don't want any," he yelled, slammed the door, and returned to his lounge.

In spite of Mr. Barbee, however, the bugle sounded once more, the door opened, and Napoleon appeared.

"Hello, everybody," he whispered, "where shall I put my army?"

"Put it in the ice box," said Mr. Barbee with a groan.

"They can't come in," said Charlie. "This is a Conference."

Napoleon disappeared, there was more whispering, several protests, and the army marched off.

"Well," said Napoleon, returning, "it's nice

## *The Crazy Fool*

and dark in here. What are you doing—developing pictures?”

Charlie pointed to the lounge. “Mr. Barbee is tired,” he explained.

“Oh,” said Napoleon. “Sorry.”

“You don’t have to whisper,” said Mr. Barbee, without opening his eyes, “I won’t listen.”

Napoleon flushed.

“Don’t mind him,” said Mrs. Barbee.

“I don’t,” said Napoleon. “The only thing I care about is my army and the glory of France.”

Mr. Barbee uncovered one eye, looked at Napoleon for a minute, then turned over on the lounge with his back to the general.

“What’s the Conference about?” asked Napoleon.

“It’s a reorganization,” explained Charlie, “of everything.”

“Oh,” said Napoleon. “How nice. Can we start now?”

## *The Crazy Fool*

"We're waiting for Edison," explained Mr. King.

As he spoke, there was the terrific blast of a steam whistle outside the window.

"There he is now," said Napoleon, "in his taxi."

The whistle blew again. Mr. Barbee groaned hideously.

In a few minutes the door opened and Edison appeared.

"Come in," said Mr. King. "You're just in time for the Conference."

"Your friends are downstairs," said Edison to Napoleon, "and they're pretty sore and they want to know how soon you can come out."

And as he spoke, some one below the window began calling, "Oh, Napoh leon—oh, Napoh leon!"

"It's my Army," explained the general and he turned eagerly to Charlie, "Is the Conference over? Can I go now?"

"What for?" asked Charlie.



## *The Crazy Fool*

"They want to go swimming——"

"Now look here," said Charlie. "We've got to have this Conference. This is business."

"Oh," said Napoleon.

The calling became more insistent.

"Oh Nap—oh—oh—leon—Come on out."

Mr. Barbee suddenly leaped up and ran to the window.

"What is it?" he called.

There was a moment's silence down below. Then timidly, "Can Napoleon come out, mister?"

"No," snapped Mr. Barbee, and he slammed the window and returned to the lounge.

There was a minute's silence, then a rock came crashing through the glass.

Charlie ran and looked out. "Boys," he said, clapping his hands, "come right back here. And get out of that flower bed—do you hear me? Boys! Get out of that *flower bed*."

Evidently, one of the soldiers stopped, for Charlie leaned out and said, "Now you tell

## *The Crazy Fool*

your friends that Napoleon can't come out now. No. He's in Conference. Yes. Well, it means he has to confer. Yes. With some other business men. Yes. No—I can't tell how long," and Charlie closed the window and returned to his desk.

"The Conference will now come to order," he said, "and the first thing we want to take up——"

He was interrupted by a most terrific Bang, right under the windows, so that the panes rattled, the cut glass chandelier shook, and Mr. Barbee muttered gibberishly.

"Oh, dear," said Napoleon. "They've got the cannon out."

"Who?"

"My Army."

BANG—the house shook again.

"Two," said Napoleon.

"I can count," groaned Mr. Barbee.

Charlie strode firmly to the window.

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## *The Crazy Fool*

"Boys," he called, "where did you get that cannon?"

There was no answer.

"Boys," he said. "Put that cannon right back where you found it."

At this, there was a protest and Charlie turned to Napoleon.

"They say they are firing a salute."

"Oh—that's right," said Napoleon. "It's Mother's Day."

BANG——

"Never forget your mother, boys," said Mr. King, holding his hands over his ears.

"Or your husband's mother," added Mrs. Barbee. "I wish to God she was in front of that cannon."

"That's the mother-in-law joke," said Mr. King accusingly. "You can't fool me."

"Now, see here," said Charlie, despairingly. "We can't have a Conference with that——"

BANG——

## *The Crazy Fool*

“—going on. *You* may enjoy it—but I’ve got to make good before midnight.”

“The thing to do is to compromise,” said Mr. King.

Napoleon drew himself up to his full height. “Napoleon never compromises,” he said. “Napoleon commands—” and he looked around the room for approval.

“Command something,” suggested Mrs. Barbee.

Napoleon looked up at the ceiling and then down at his shoes. “I can’t think of anything,” he said. “Isn’t that always the way?”

“How do you mean ‘compromise’?” asked Charlie of Mr. King.

“Ask them in,” replied Mr. King. “Ask the army into your Conference. That would be a shrewd business move.”

“Say, that’s an idea,” said Charlie and he walked to the window and called, “Hello, boys!”

BANG—

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Well!" cried Charlie to the soldiers, "that was a great *big* bang, wasn't it? *My*, what a big bang."

There was no immediate response.

"Boys," said Charlie, "why don't you come on up here with us?"

"What for?" asked the soldiers, suspiciously.

"I've got something to show you," replied Charlie, "something very nice."

"A woman?" asked the Grand Army eagerly.

Napoleon blushed. "I can't understand," he muttered apologetically, "where they pick up those things. Here, let me speak to them."

As he appeared at the window, the Army in a body threw their caps into the air and shouted, "Vive l'Empereur!"

Napoleon bowed, deeply affected. "My men," he began, "the lilies of France——"

"What?" yelled his men.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"He says to come on up," yelled Mr. King, stepping forward.

"Hurrah!" cried the Army.

"And bring your cannon," added Mr. Barbee with an oath.

In a minute the Army stamped in.

"This is a Conference," explained Napoleon, "and lots of fun."

"When do we eat?" asked the soldiers.

"Later," said Napoleon, with a hopeful glance at Charlie.

They took their places around the room, three of them planking themselves down on the edge of Mr. Barbee's resting place.

"I'm trying to sleep on this lounge," protested that gentleman, "if you don't mind."

"Well, what do you know about that?" said Athos, one of the three soldiers. "This bozo says he's sleeping here," and they laughed heartily.

"Tell him a bedtime story," suggested Porthos, his companion.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"About Peter Rabbit," said the third of the trio, a Mr. Oglethorpe by name. "Tell him the one about Peter Rabbit."

"Did you hear the one about Peter Rabbit?" asked Athos.

Mr. Barbee did not answer.

"Well," began Athos, "it seems there was a rabbit called Peter and say, boy, that guy was some rabbit, too—he had 'em all stopped."

Porthos began to chuckle. "Gee, this is a bird," he said.

"And one day he meets up with a dame on the street—" continued Athos.

Porthos opened his mouth in a loud guffaw and then he suddenly saw Mrs. Barbee, who had been sitting in the shadow in the corner, and the guffaw left his lips.

"And he says to her—" went on Athos.

Porthos nudged him, and whispered, "Hey!" behind his hand.

"He says to her, 'Don't you remember me? My name's Rabbit——' "

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Hey!—" a little louder from Porthos, with a little harder nudge.

"What's the matter?" said Athos. "Ain't I telling it right? So the dame—" and he began to chuckle— "she says to Pete—he was the rabbit, see—she says—'Well, if your name's Rabbit, my name's——' "

"HEY!"

Athos stopped, with his mouth open. "Oh, Judas," he said, "I didn't see you there, lady."

"Don't mind about *her*," said Mr. Barbee, with a sneer, "she's probably heard it before."

Athos, Porthos and Mr. Oglethorpe turned around.

"Say, listen, buddy," said Mr. Oglethorpe, "they don't talk that way about ladies, see, around here."

"Oh, don't they?" sneered Mr. Barbee.

"No, they don't," said Porthos, "and would you like to do anything about it?"

"Listen—*listen*," cried Charlie, beating on



## *The Crazy Fool*

the table with an inkwell, "we've got to get this Conference started——"

"I'll Conference this guy," said Mr. Oglethorpe, "right on the jaw."

"Now, look out," cried Napoleon, running up. "You know what you promised me about not fighting."

"But I ought to sock him one," insisted Mr. Oglethorpe, "he's wearing spats."

"Some other time, perhaps," suggested Mrs. Barbee, with a winning smile. "There will be lots of other opportunities."

"Oh, all right," said Mr. Oglethorpe, "if you say so, lady."

"That's better," said Napoleon, relieved.

Charlie rapped for order. "First and foremost," he said, "this Conference will take up the question of reorganization. Are there any suggestions?"

There was a pause. Then Napoleon stood up.

"Mr. Hatch," he began, "I just want to say

## *The Crazy Fool*

that I am all in favor of reorganization and I think the most important thing to be done around here now is to ask the fellows not to throw matches into the bath tubs because yesterday I spent almost two hours trying to let the water out of the tub, and honestly, Mr. Hatch, I haven't got two hours to waste every time some fellow does a trick like that," and he sat down.

After a moment's silence, one of the soldiers rose.

"Another very important thing," he said, "is the question of laundry. Now last week when my laundry came back, there were two handkerchiefs short and one brown sock, and I asked the fellow about it and he promised he would do something, but that isn't the point. The point is that they charge you for doing your work and then when you get it back you are one sock or two handkerchiefs short, like I was last week. Last Thursday it came back.

## *The Crazy Fool*

And good night, they have your laundry almost five days." He sat down.

"If nobody has any objections," said Porthos, "I'd like to say a few words about the way some of us fellows here at the Lodge talk in public— Last night I was coming home with a girl and right outside the porch we stopped for a minute, and there was two fellows on the porch and every other word was 'son-of-a you know' or worse, and I don't think it's right for us to talk that way because it makes a bad impression every time on strangers."

Athos got slowly to his feet.

"I just want to say," he began, "that there are still several fellows who haven't paid me for last month's gas bill," and he looked around defiantly and sat down.

Charlie took the chair. "I am sure," he said, "that those are all very good ideas, and it will do us a lot of good to think them over,

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## The Crazy Fool

and now are there any more ~~amendments~~ . . .  
we take a vote?"

No one had any [redacted]  
Edison. "What are [redacted]  
he suggested

"Everything" ~~that~~ ~~is~~ ~~needed~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~new~~ ~~era~~ ~~is~~ ~~new~~ ~~ideas~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~spirit~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~living~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~thought~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~action~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~organization~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~administration~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~education~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~research~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~communication~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~transportation~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~energy~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~technology~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~industry~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~commerce~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~finance~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~law~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~politics~~ ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ 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~~new~~ ~~mode~~ ~~of~~ ~~te~~

"He" was ...  
Not ...

"On the other hand,"

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\_\_\_\_\_

~~SECRET~~ ~~TOP SECRET~~

## *The Crazy Fool*

And good night, they have your laundry almost five days." He sat down.

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## *The Crazy Fool*

and now are there any more suggestions before we take a vote?"

No one had any more suggestions except Edison. "What are we going to reorganize?" he suggested.

"Everything," said Charlie. "This place needs new blood—new life—new ideas. Pep, and a filing system. Push-buttons—buzzers. Modern ideas. A business administration. Eliminate waste. Cut down the overhead. Build up the sales."

"Hurrah!" cried the soldiers, and they hummed snatches from an army song which went:  
(Snatch.)

"Cut down the overhead. Build up the sales."

"Now," continued Charlie, "for practical details."

"Yes," cried the soldiers in unison, "give us practical details before we drift onto the dangerous rocks of Theory, those Scylla and Charybdis of Business——"

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Say," interrupted Edison, "are you boys sailors or soldiers or what? And is this a Conference or a Cartoon?"

Charlie rose. "I think I can answer that question," he said, and he proudly showed them his Organization Chart.

"That's dandy," said Napoleon, enthusiastically, "and how did you rule those lines so straight?"

"With a ruler," said Charlie, modestly. "I'm glad you like it."

"Oh, very much," said Napoleon, and then he added, eagerly: "Is the Conference over?"

"This one is," said Charlie, "but there will be another in fifteen minutes."

"What do we do now?" asked Edison, "now that we're Department Heads?"

"Why," replied Charlie, "you're responsible for your department. Let's see—yours is——"

"Miscellaneous," replied Edison.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Well," said Charlie, "that would cover anything miscellaneous."

"I see," said Edison.

"And yours," said Charlie, pointing to Napoleon, "is Fire Department. Now under that I want you to arrange something for this afternoon——"

"Oh, dear," said Napoleon, "I was going somewhere this afternoon—but all right. What do you want me to arrange? Some fires?"

"No," replied Charlie. "Some sort of Outing—an Employees' Picnic—with games and things. The employees must be kept healthy and contented, or else they will strike."

"I see," said Napoleon, and he began biting his finger nails thoughtfully.

"Mustn't do that, sire," said one of the soldiers, saluting.

"Can I go now?" asked Napoleon. "I promise I'll fix up something dandy."

"Yes," replied Charlie, "but be sure and be



## *The Crazy Fool*

back in fifteen minutes for the next Conference."

"Yes, sir," said Napoleon, and he and his Army ran for the door and disappeared with loud whoops of joy.

"Now," said Charlie, "I want to start an advertising campaign—right away. A demand for our product must be created at once."

"I think Don Quixote is your man for that," said Mr. King. "He has a certain gift for publicity—or perhaps the Saint——"

"The Saint?" asked Charlie.

"She's retired from the world," said Mr. King. "She's leading the life of a recluse. I'll see if I can get her on the telephone."

He went outside while the others waited.

"She got lonely in her cave," explained Edison, "and had the telephone put in. It's a party line," he added, with a grin, "and she isn't so lonely any more."

Mr. King returned. "She will receive us,"

## *The Crazy Fool*

he said, "in her cave," and Charlie reached for his hat.

"You won't need it," said Mr. King, "it's upstairs."

"It must be quite a cave," said Charlie.

"Well, she tried a real cave," said Mr. King, "but it was badly lighted and rather hard for her friends to get to and there wasn't any bathroom. This is really much more comfortable."

"I think I'll stay here," said Edison, "and fix you up some push buttons. She doesn't like me very well, anyway."

They walked upstairs, leaving Mr. Barbee still fast asleep on the lounge and Edison tinkering with the chandelier.

The Saint was sitting up in bed, reading a magazine. There were no chairs in the room—no ornaments on the walls. On a small, severely plain table beside her was a Bible and a breakfast tray. Her face was sweet and pure and full of inner radiance with the ex-

## *The Crazy Fool*

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"Yes, sir," said Napoleon, and he and his Army ran for the door and disappeared with loud whoops of joy.

"Now," said Charlie, "I want to start an advertising campaign—right away. A demand for our product must be created at once."

"I think Don Quixote is your man for that," said Mr. King. "He has a certain gift for publicity—or perhaps the Saint——"

"The Saint?" asked Charlie.

"She's retired from the world," said Mr. King. "She's leading the life of a recluse. I'll see if I can get her on the telephone."

He went outside while the others waited.

"She got lonely in her cave," explained Edison, "and had the telephone put in. It's a party line," he added, with a grin, "and she isn't so lonely any more."

Mr. King returned. "She will receive us,"

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he said, "in her cave," and Charlie reached for his hat.

"You won't need it," said Mr. King, "it's upstairs."

"It must be quite a cave," said Charlie.

"Well, she tried a real cave," said Mr. King, "but it was badly lighted and rather hard for her friends to get to and there wasn't any bathroom. This is really much more comfortable."

"I think I'll stay here," said Edison, "and fix you up some push buttons. She doesn't like me very well, anyway."

They walked upstairs, leaving Mr. Barbee still fast asleep on the lounge and Edison tinkering with the chandelier.

The Saint was sitting up in bed, reading a magazine. There were no chairs in the room—no ornaments on the walls. On a small, severely plain table beside her was a Bible and a breakfast tray. Her face was sweet and pure and full of inner radiance with the ex-

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ception of a slight touch of soft-boiled egg in the left corner of her mouth.

"We bring you greetings from the outside world," said Mr. King on entering.

"Ah, why do you speak of that which does not exist?" said the Saint with a patient smile as she extended her hand, and to Charlie and Mrs. Barbee she explained: "I mean that this is the only real world. The other—your world—what is it? Vanity. Emptiness. Sorrow. But here, in my retreat——"

The telephone rang.

"Excuse me a minute," said the Saint. "Hello," she said. "Yes. Yes—this is she. Who? Oh, hello, Edith. How are you, dear? No—not at all. No, really—I've been up for hours. Yes. Well, you were a dear to call. Yes, about eleven. Please. Goodbye, dear."

"Now," she said, putting down the telephone, "where were we?"

"You were talking about the beauty of solitude," said Mr. King.

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"Ah," said the Saint, "if I could only tell you foolish children. If I could only open your eyes. If you could only see that the material world is nothing—if you could only understand that the world of the mind and the spirit is everything—no sorrow—no sickness—no pain—nothing but joy—and happiness—and health."

"And speaking of that," said Mr. King, "Mr. Hatch would like to talk to you about an advertising campaign."

"Oh, yes," said the Saint, interestedly, "of what nature?"

"I want you to put over our product," said Charlie, eagerly. "I want its name to be on every tongue—in every eye—on every barn——"

"And what is this product?" asked the Saint.

"We'll decide that later," replied Charlie, "but the thing to do now is to create a demand—make everybody want it—crazy for it——"



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"I think," added Mr. King, "that Mrs. Barbee and I can help you in the campaign, too. I know of a very nice name for our product already—and a good name is half the battle."

"Give me a piece of paper and a pencil," said the Saint, eagerly.

"Good," cried Charlie, lighting another cigar, "I know you can do it. I believe in you, Saint," and with a hearty handshake, he bowed his way rapidly out of the cave and the others followed.

On the way downstairs, they passed a strange looking gentleman in spectacles with a sad face and very bright eyes.

"Dante," said Mr. King by way of introduction, "the writer."

"I can use you," said Charlie, shaking hands cordially. "Come with me."

When they got back to the office, both Edison and Mr. Barbee had disappeared.

"Sit down, Mr. Dante," said Charlie, indi-

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cating a comfortable chair. "Have a cigar," and he held a lighted match for the other.

"You're a writer, Mr. Dante, aren't you?" began Charlie.

"Yes," replied the other, a little defiantly.

"What sort of things do you write?" asked Charlie.

"Well," said Dante, "I'm working on a play now——"

"What's the name?" asked Charlie, and he added, "A good name is half the battle."

"Two-thirds," added Mr. King, reminiscently.

Dante hesitated. "I'm going to call it," he said, "*The Divine Comedy*."

"*The Divine Comedy*," said Charlie, with a chuckle, "Well, that's a good title—*The Divine Comedy*, eh," and he chuckled once more. "That's what people want—comedies. Yes, sir—a man who can make people laugh has got a great gift—a great gift."

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Dante was silent. "It isn't a comedy," he said at last. "It's a tragedy."

Charlie rolled his cigar around in his mouth. "A tragedy, eh," he said. "What about?"

"These people here," replied Dante.

"What people?" asked Charlie, in surprise.

"Here—in the Lodge," replied Dante. "Edison—and Don Quixote—and the Motor-man and Conductor—and the Saint—and everybody."

Charlie laughed. "Why, what's tragic about them?" he asked.

Dante was silent. "Would you like to hear a little of my play?" he asked, picking up his portfolio.

"Why, yes—just leave it here and I'll look it over some time," said Charlie.

"No," said Dante. "I'd rather read it. You might not start at the right place."

"Oh, all right," said Charlie, good humoredly. "Give us a bit."

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Dante took out several sheets of paper, looked through them carefully, cleared his throat, scanned the pages again, and then very unexpectedly began to cry.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Charlie.  
"You haven't begun yet."

"It's so tragic," said Dante.

"What's so tragic?" asked Charlie.

"The world," replied Dante, and he broke down completely.

"There, there," said Charlie, patting him on the back, "that's just the way you feel *now*."

"The power of the world," sobbed Dante, "to torture its children. The hell here—the hell on earth—right here. Can't you see—these people—the pity of it—they're caught by the world—and tortured——"

"Now, that's all right," soothed Charlie.  
"You're just tired. Things look that way when you get tired."

"Oh," gasped Dante.

The telephone rang. Charlie answered.

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"Pratt National—I mean Hatch Products Company—Mr. Hatch in person speaking," he answered. "Oh, yes. Yes, I see. I see. Great. That's a fine idea, Saint, I'll start somebody to work on it right away," and he hung up happily.

"Listen, Dante," said Charlie, "wipe up those tears. Everything's going to be O.K. There's a big chance for you here. Can you write a movie scenario?"

"Not till I finish my play," said Dante, and he added, "We're rehearsing part of it now."

Charlie considered. "How long have you been rehearsing?"

"Going on four years," replied Dante, "next month."

"Good," said Charlie. "We'll give the play tonight—in connection with our dinner to the Sales Force. And in addition I want you to get right to work on a moving-picture scenario to advertise our product."

"What?" asked Dante.

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"It's the Saint's idea," replied Charlie. "And it ought to be a knockout. You write a movie story—we have it produced—and the plot is somehow connected with the use of our product. It's great—and if you put it over, it will be the making of you, Dante. And, oh, yes," said Charlie, consulting his notes, "I want you also to get up a House Organ——"

"A what?"

"A House Organ—a magazine for our employees. Enthusiasm. Pep. Boost. You know——"

"When do I start?" asked Dante.

"Immediately," said Charlie. "Right away. I want the copy," and he consulted his watch, "by two o'clock."

"And the movie scenario?"

"By four. Get any one you want to help you. That's all," and he bowed the somewhat bewildered Dante out of the office.

"Now," said Charlie, relighting his cigar, "what next?" and he picked up the calendar

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and was lost in deep thought. "August 8th," he said at last, "will be Judith's birthday."

There was a knock.

"Come in."

A curious looking individual entered. She was a woman.

"I'm a reporter," she said. "Mr. Dante sent me right around."

"He's not so slow, that fellow," commented Mr. King.

"Mr. Dante thought," went on the reporter, "that an interview with you would go well in the first number of the House Organ. Something about how you rose to your present position—perhaps, 'How I Became an Executive at Twenty.'"

"I'm twenty-three," said Charlie.

"Oh, really," said the reporter. "Let me put that down. You say you are——"

"Twenty-three," said Charlie, "going on twenty-four."

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"That's right," said the reporter. "And tell me, Mr.—Mr.——"

"Hatch," replied Charlie.

"That's right," said the reporter. "Let me put that down—" and she did. "Tell me, Mr. Hatch, what do you think about something?"

"Something?" asked Charlie, "what something?"

"Oh, something," replied the reporter. "What is your candid opinion of something?"

"I think something is wonderful," said Charlie, "and we have just begun. Jazz music is responsible. Parents should not let their children have automobiles before they are nine. New York women eat too fast. The farmer must be protected."

"I see," said the lady, writing frantically, "but do you agree with what's-his-name?"

"What's-his-name is wrong," replied Charlie. "He comes over to this country and we pay our good money to hear him tell us we are no good. Lincoln was right. So was Jef-



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ferson Davis. California is God's country. The future of America lies in our great Northwest. God bless Massachusetts. Those brave pilgrim fathers. Lake Erie white fish are excellent with butter sauce."

"That's very interesting," said the reporter. "Are you an old Lake Erie boy?"

"I was born," replied Charlie, "with a grim determination to succeed in business. Whatever job I undertook I tried to be the *very best* at that job. If it was my duty to lick stamps, I licked *more* stamps than the other boys. If it was sweeping out offices, I swept out *more* offices. If it was filling inkwells, I filled *more* inkwells. Nothing was too small or too unimportant for me to do. And one day, to my great joy, my employer noticed me and said, 'Who is that boy?' 'Charlie Hatch,' replied one of my jealous confreres. 'Well, fire him,' said my employer. 'He's a god-damned nuisance.' And so I rose rapidly until I got into the ribbon goods department and from there

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it was just a step to the ladies' and misses' shoes—until today—” and Charlie indicated the completion of the sentence with a significant sweep of his hand. “Everything I touched seemed to turn to gold. People called me ‘lucky’—‘Hatch’s luck’ became the name of a famous tulip, and a sandwich. I don’t know—maybe it *was* luck. My friends prefer to call it ability. And even with my success, I shall never forget those early beginnings—those days when I didn’t know where the next meal was coming from,” and he seemed buried for a while in memory lane.

“The secret of my success?” Charlie laughed, “Ha-ha. Well, there’s only one secret—and that’s hard word. *Hard work*,” and getting up quickly with a smile, he indicated that the interview was over.

“Thank you,” said the reporter and she tip-toed nervously out of the room.

“Now,” said Charlie, looking at his watch, “it’s time for another Conference. And, of

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course, Napoleon isn't here. Well—we'll just have to go on without him."

"What is the subject of *this* Conference?" asked Mrs. Barbee, taking up her notebook.

"Strikes," said Charlie. "There may be a strike any day now."

The door burst open and a young girl rushed in. She was panting very hard.

"There's a strike," she cried. "You must come at once. The men have been inflamed by Agitators. Rioting is imminent."

"Has the militia been called out?" asked Charlie. "The governor must call out the militia and issue a statement. And get me a taxi at once—my place is with my men."

"All the wires are down," said the girl.

"Then I must ride," cried Charlie. "Ride like fury—and not spare my horse. Is there a horse?"

"I don't think so," replied the girl.

"Don't be silly," said Charlie, and taking her by the hand he rushed out the door and

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across the lawn. "Where's the barn?" he demanded. "You can always find horses hanging around barns. What's that over there?"

"That's a horse," replied the girl.

"Well, then, there ought to be a barn somewhere near," said Charlie triumphantly.

"Yes," replied the girl, "but we were looking for a horse."

"So we were," said Charlie, and together, they walked over to where the animal was standing.

"Yes," said Charlie, at last, "that's a horse."

The horse raised its head and looked at Charlie, then turned and walked away.

"It's 'Beautiful Joe,'" explained the girl.

"How nice," said Charlie, taking a lump of sugar from his pocket. "I always carry a little sugar or some hay with me. I love animals. Here, bossy-bossy!"

"I love animals, too," said the girl. "I guess I'm part animal myself."

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Charlie looked at her curiously. She certainly was interesting. And in that simple gingham dress, with her tanned legs and lovely bare feet— Once more, there flashed through Charlie's mind that vague feeling of disloyalty toward Judith, which Mrs. Barbee had momentarily inspired in him. This girl, too, had something that Judith very definitely didn't have—and Mrs. Barbee had something that Judith even more definitely didn't have. It was very distressing—and very unfair.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I'm Sally," she replied, "the mountaineer's daughter."

With one toe, she traced designs in the grass. "That's my horse," she said, "I raised him on a bottle. He was left outside our door one night, during a storm. Pappy wanted to drown him but I wouldn't let them. He's sort of crazy—the horse, I mean. Pappy's crazy, too. He does tricks."

"Who?" asked Charlie.

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"The horse," replied the girl. "Would you like to see some?"

"Certainly," replied Charlie.

"Have you got a pack of cards?" asked the girl.

"No," replied Charlie.

"That's too bad," said the girl. "He does some lovely card tricks. Would you like to see him eat a banana?"

"Yes."

"Have you got a banana?"

"No."

"That makes it harder," said the girl.

Charlie laughed.

The girl flushed. "I'm very proud of him," she said. "And I won't have you laughing at him, Mr. City Man."

"I'm sorry," said Charlie, "and say, I was just thinking—how would you like to bring him to the Rotary Club for luncheon some Thursday?"

"The what?"

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"The Rotary Club—it's a club I'm going to organize, of wide awake business men. He could be the guest of honor some noon—and do tricks for us. We have somebody every week."

"He's very sensitive," said the girl.

"It would do him a lot of good," explained Charlie. "Give him a lot of publicity."

"But he doesn't want publicity."

"Yes, he does," said Charlie. "Everybody wants publicity."

Sally had walked over and put her arm around the horse's neck. "Did you ever hear the story," she asked, "about the horse who sits on eggs?"

"No," said Charlie, with a grin.

"Well," replied Sally, "this is that horse. One day a stranger came round here wanting to buy a horse—a city fellow like you—only much older—sort of a bank president—very dignified. Well, anyway, he wanted to buy my horse—and pappy was just crazy enough

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to sell him—but he says to the stranger, just before he closed the deal, ‘I think I ought to tell you about this horse before you take him,’ and the gentleman says, ‘That’s mighty nice of you, and what is it you wish to tell me about this horse? Come, my man, speak up.’

“‘Well,’ says pappy, ‘this here horse sits on eggs.’

“‘What?’ says the gentleman. ‘Sits on what?’

“‘Eggs,’ replies pappy.

“‘Sits on eggs?’ says the gentleman, blinking.

“‘That’s right,’ says pappy. ‘Sits on eggs.’

“‘Well,’ said the gentleman. ‘That’s very interesting. But I want this horse very badly and I generally get what I want.’

“So pappy hitched the horse up and off drove the gentleman, sitting very straight. And sure enough, before long, he came to a farmhouse where there was a basket of eggs out in the front yard, and what did Beautiful



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Joe do but try to climb over the fence and sit down on those eggs because that's the kind of a horse he is.

"'Whoa!' yelled the gentleman, and a farmer came running out of the house and together, between the both of them, they grabbed Beautiful Joe and got him away from the eggs and out into the road again and the gentleman thanked the farmer and gave him a five dollar bill and drove on.

"Well, he must have drove a mile further and then suddenly he came to a small creek where there was a bridge over the creek and right in the middle of that bridge Beautiful Joe stopped and what did he do but jump over the bridge and sit down in the creek.

"Well, that made the gentleman very angry, indeed, because he had been thrown out of the buggy and had got all wet, and broken his left arm in two places, and he was late, anyway, so when he got Joe finally out of the creek, he

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drove on to the next town and right away he called pappy up on the telephone.

"‘Say,’ he said, talking very loud, ‘about that horse you sold me.’

"‘Yeh,’ says pappy.

"‘You said that horse sits on eggs,’” screamed the gentleman.

"‘Yes,’ says pappy, ‘that’s right. Sits on eggs.’

"‘Well,’ says the gentleman, ‘I was driving along the Sunbury pike and we came to a bridge and right in the middle of the bridge that blankety blank horse jumped over and——’

"‘Oh my gosh,’ says pappy. ‘Oh my *gosh*. I forgot to tell you. He sits on fish, *too*.’”

Charlie walked over and kissed Beautiful Joe on the nose.

- “Do you think,” asked Sally, “that the Rotary Club would like Joe?”

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Charlie suddenly took out his watch. "Judas," he said, "that reminds me. I've got to be getting to that strike. Here it is eleven thirty already."

"Oh, strikes are always late," said Sally. "Wait till I change my dress."

"Oh, come on as you are."

"I couldn't go to a strike looking like this," she replied, indicating her costume. "You wait here and Joe will entertain you—won't you, Joe?" and, giving the horse a kindly pat, she ran off.

"Well," said Charlie, after a silence of several minutes in which neither said anything. "It's certainly pretty country up here."

Beautiful Joe did not answer.

"I suppose," said Charlie, "that you get a lot of rain?"

That didn't seem to interest the horse, either, so Charlie tried another tack. "Ever drive a Buick?" he asked.

No answer.

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"My name's Hatch," said Charlie. "I'm up here on business. A reorganization matter."

The horse began slowly to nibble grass, and in a few more minutes, Sally ran out towards him.

"Did I keep you waiting?" she asked.

Charlie looked at his watch. "Not at all—" he said, "I've just come."

She leaped on the horse's back. Charlie followed.

"To the riot," he said, "and hurry up—we're late."

"Hurry up, *please*," corrected Sally and the horse started.

After a little while, the road seemed to turn off into a wood.

"Are you sure this is the shortest way?" asked Charlie.

"There would be a good place to eat," replied Sally, pointing as they jogged along.

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"Eat what?" asked Charlie. "Grass? I don't like grass."

"Neither do I," replied Sally. "I meant eat lunch. It would be sort of fun to have a picnic. It's such a nice day."

"Yes, but I have to go to this strike," said Charlie, "and after that, I've got to—let me see—to organize a publicity campaign and then, probably, there will be a directors' meeting—and several more important Conferences."

"But it is a nice day, isn't it?" said Sally.

"Yes," replied Charlie, "it is," and he began to whistle nervously and look at his watch. "It is all right to whistle in these woods?" he asked.

Sally laughed.

A bird somewhere above them answered his whistle.

"Hear that?" said Charlie and the horse stopped while he repeated the call. Once more the bird answered. "That's the Ameri-

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can pipplet, or titlark," explained Charlie. "The male. Now wait, and I'll call the female. The female," he added apologetically, "lays the eggs."

Charlie whistled violently, there was a whirring noise in the tree above them, and a rabbit appeared.

"The female pipplet, or titlark," said Charlie, with a gesture.

"But it's a rabbit," said Sally.

"I know it," said Charlie, "and I wonder what it's doing up in that tree."

"Do you know any good rabbit calls?" asked Sally.

"Several," said Charlie. "This means, 'What are you doing up in that tree?' and he made a noise with his teeth at which the rabbit yawned several times and disappeared.

"I used to live with birds," explained Charlie, "in order to study their habits. I had a bird suit made so that they couldn't tell me from one of them. I got some wonderful pho-

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tographs that way. Of course, I had many interesting adventures and many droll ones too, as, for instance, when the chief of the birds, out of gratitude for a service I had rendered him, wanted to give me several of his wives. Ha. Ha. Ha. Well, I had a time getting out of that, as you may imagine. Now this is a bird call meaning 'Your bank balance is overdrawn twelve dollars and forty-eight cents.' "

Charlie pursed up his lips and whistled. Nothing happened.

"I'm Hatch of the Woods," he said, proudly, "and all wild things love me. Do you love me?"

"Yes," she replied, and she turned around and kissed him on the mouth.

"This is more like a yellow taxi than almost any horse I've ever known," said Charlie, and to Beautiful Joe, he said, "Just drive around the park a bit."

So Beautiful Joe took a side road which

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didn't seem to lead anywhere in particular, and after they had gone a little ways, Sally said, "I think that that would be a nice place to have lunch—over there," and she pointed to a grassy knoll under a large elm tree beside a lake, and she kissed Charlie again, and then one to be good on, which made Charlie laugh very loudly.

But just as they dismounted from the horse, a strange looking gentleman stepped out from behind the tree, handed Charlie a card, and walked away. Charlie looked at the card and saw only the word "Socko."

"Let's sit down," said Sally, taking Charlie by the hand. They dropped onto the green-sward, and Sally put her head in his lap and he began to stroke her hair.

Three men suddenly appeared from apparently nowhere. They wore sandwich boards, and marched solemnly across the green in front of the two picnickers. Each board proclaimed in large letters the word "SOCKO."



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"Socko what?" asked Charlie, but the men marched off without answering.

Sally looked up into Charlie's face with a smile, and he bent over and was just about to kiss her, when out of the lake in front of them appeared another gentleman.

"Socko!" he cried, and dove back under water.

"Wait a minute," said Charlie and he picked up a rock. "Come on back," he called. "I want to ask you a question."

In a minute, the man reappeared, and Charlie threw the rock at him but missed.

"Socko," cried the man.

"Say, what's the idea?" asked Charlie, looking for another rock.

"It's an advertising campaign," explained the man, treading water. "Socko is the name of a product. This is to interest you in it. This is to make you want Socko. Great scheme, eh?"

"Marvelous," said Charlie, and he heaved  
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another rock, which also missed. "Who got it up?"

"The Saint," replied the man, "and Mr. King."

"Oh, my gosh," said Charlie. "It's *my* product," and he tore his watch out of his pocket. "And here I am sitting here—listen, Sally, I've simply got to go to the strike. You wait here and I'll come back."

Sally laughed but did not answer.

"Isn't it a great scheme?" said Charlie, enthusiastically. "Now, you wait right here—and say, Sally, can I borrow your horse?" and without waiting for her answer, Charlie buttoned up his coat and vest, and ran toward Beautiful Joe.

"The lady says she'll wait," said Charlie to Joe, and they rode off.

"Socko," said Sally softly as they disappeared in the distance.

All the way along the road, Charlie was

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delighted to see "You Need Socko" signs on every tree and fence post.

"That Saint's a wonder," said Charlie as they passed a large billboard, reading, "Three Great Presidents—Lincoln, Washington and Socko. You need Socko." In fact, this last sign affected him so strongly that when they reached the village, he stopped Beautiful Joe in front of a drug store and rushed in.

"I need Socko," he said to the clerk.

"Oh," said the clerk. "I'm sorry. Tell me about it."

"I need Socko," Charlie repeated.

"We are none of us perfect," said the clerk, with a kindly smile, and then he added, "Was there anything you wanted?"

"Socko," said Charlie.

The clerk looked at him.

"Do you mean to tell me," said Charlie, "that you don't keep Socko?"

"Wait a minute," said the clerk, "I'll ask Mr. Murdock."

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Mr. Murdock emerged from behind the prescription partition.

"Have you got Socko?" asked Charlie.

"I believe so," replied Mr. Murdock and he began looking at the rows of bottles along the shelves. "Citrate of Magnesia is very nice," he murmured.

"Isn't it?" said Charlie.

"Have you tried Hunyadi Janos?" asked Mr. Murdock.

"Often," said Charlie.

"I suppose you know Castor Oil?"

"Only to speak to," replied Charlie. "I want Socko," and his face became very set and firm. "I'm Mr. Hatch," he added, "president of the Socko Company."

"Ah, yes," mused the man. "Hmmm. Socko. Ah," he said. "Here we are, Mr. Hatch, right below Pluto. That arrangement is purely alphabetical—not at all in the order of their importance," and he reached up to take down a bottle.

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"Bring me a glass, Eddie," he said.

"But—" said Charlie. Mr. Murdock had already taken the cap off the bottle. "Wait a minute," repeated Charlie, weakly. "Are you sure that's Socko?"

"Certainly," replied the man, pouring out a glassful and passing it over the counter.

"But—" said Charlie, gazing helplessly at the drink.

The man handed him the bottle. There was no mistaking it.

"I think," said Charlie, resolute at last, "that I'll wait, if you don't mind."

"Not at all," replied Mr. Murdock. "Shall I pour it back?"

"Yes," said Charlie, recovering quickly, "that would be very nice. I really wanted it for my horse. Beautiful Joe, you know."

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Murdock, "Beautiful Joe. A lovely name. Was there anything else, for your horse, Mr. Hatch? Razor blades? Bathing caps? Hair nets?"

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"No, thank you," said Charlie. "Good day. Oh, yes,—can you direct me to the strike?"

"Third block down—first turn to the left," said Mr. Murdock, and Charlie thanked him and walked out.

"I bought you something nice," said Charlie to the horse and he held up the bottle. "See? Nice Socko for Beautiful Joe."

Joe looked at the bottle with one eye.

"What does Beautiful Joe say?" asked Charlie, kindly.

The horse laughed. Very loudly. Then he backed slowly into the middle of the road, whirled three times and was off like a shot.

"Hey, wait," cried Charlie from the sidewalk. "Hey—Joe. Wait. I was just kidding."

Joe stopped and returned.

"Three blocks down—and first turn to the left," said Charlie, as he mounted.

He noticed a policeman standing outside the drug store watching him.

"Good morning, officer," he said. "I'm Mr.

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Hatch—president of the Socko Company. I'm now on my way to the strike in my plant."

The policeman said nothing.

"I trust," said Charlie, "that the police force will be ready to help us at a minute's notice. Lawlessness must be put down. Order must be preserved. You realize that, officer."

Charlie touched the horse and they started away.

"Hey, what's this—" said Charlie, discovering a tag fastened on the horse's saddle.

"You are," he read, "etc.—etc.—violation of Traffic Ordinance—4725 B—parking on wrong side of——"

"Hey, wait a minute," and he turned Joe's head around and returned to the policeman.

"What's the meaning of this, officer?" he said. "You must be new on this beat. I'm Mr. Hatch. I'm a great friend of Senator Kirby."

"I don't care who you are," said the policeman. "You were parked on the wrong side."

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"I sat across from Police Commissioner Enright's daughter at a banquet once," said Charlie.

"The law's the law," said the other, stubbornly.

"Oh, now listen," said Charlie, smiling suddenly. "That's all right. We all realize that. We all make mistakes, eh, officer? Here—have a bottle of Socko——"

"Well—" said the policeman.

"I'll send you a whole case in the morning," said Charlie. "And you must come down and look over our plant. Bring the wife."

"Well," said the officer, "it will be all right this time," and he tore up the tag. "But you want to be careful."

"Thanks, officer," said Charlie, and he turned Joe around. "Don't forget," and he galloped off.

As they neared the plant, a number of men and boys were walking in the opposite direction.



## *The Crazy Fool*

"How's the strike coming along?" called Charlie.

"All over," they replied, "but the shouting."

"How was it?" asked Charlie.

"Oh, pretty fair," they replied.

"Maybe we can get there for the shouting," said Charlie, pressing spurs into Joe. "I like shouting," and they drove into the yard.

"I'm Mr. Hatch," he announced, "your president."

"You're late," said one of the employees. "It's almost over. The governor's just leaving and the militia went about three quarters of an hour ago. Maybe there's some lemonade still left."

"I must say something to my men," said Charlie. "I owe it to them," and he got down off of Joe and after pulling on a pair of overalls, and grabbing a bit of waste and an oil can, he rushed around to the large yard in front of the bottling building where the strikes were generally held.

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"Men," he cried, holding up his hands for silence. "Men—fellow employees—I want to thank you for the judgment and fairmindedness with which you have settled this misunderstanding. I want to assure you that your interests are our interests and I am certain that now we will all put our shoulders to the wheel and work together for the good of the whole. I want to announce that as an evidence of the company's good will toward you, and as a token of our appreciation of your services, there will be a picnic this afternoon to which all employees, who have been with us over a year, and their families, are invited."

"Hurrah!" cried the men.

"But I want you all to remember, this afternoon," said Charlie, "that you are gentlemen and employees of the Socko Company and don't leave a lot of egg shells and waste paper lying around."

"That we won't," cried the men.

"And starting tomorrow," continued Char-

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## *The Crazy Fool*

lie, "I am going to think about a bonus system——"

"Hurrah!"

"But you must realize——"

Mrs. Barbee suddenly rushed up. "Oh, there you are," she said. "You must come at once."

"Why?" asked Charlie.

"There's a run on the bank."

Charlie waved his hands at the men. "Goodbye, boys," he cried. "And don't forget about this afternoon," and he left amid a storm of cheers.

Beautiful Joe was standing where he had left him. Charlie took off his overalls, put on a silk hat and mounted. "To the bank," he ordered, wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

Luckily the bank was just across the street. A long line of impatient depositors were waiting outside the door. There was much mut-

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tering and shaking of fists and cries of "What a bank!"

Charlie stopped only long enough to send Beautiful Joe back to Sally with some flowers and a note "Detained by run on bank" and then he grabbed Mrs. Barbee's hand and rushed through the crowded door and upstairs into the president's room. The president was ashen. Jones and Mr. King were vice-presidents.

"Well, King," said Charlie. "What about it?"

Mr. King shook his head. "We've got to hold them off," he said, "until that bullion arrives from Washington, D. C."

"The thing to do," said Charlie, thinking quickly, "is to inspire confidence. There ought to be a wave of confidence sweep over that crowd like wheat before a storm."

He considered a moment. "I have it," he said. "We will all go out on the balcony, overlooking the crowd, and be confident."

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## *The Crazy Fool*

"About what?" asked Mr. King.

"About everything," said Charlie, so he and Mr. King and Jones and the president walked out on the balcony, smoking 50 cent cigars.

"Well," said Charlie, in a loud voice, "there's certainly plenty of money in *this* bank."

"I'm confident of that," said the president.

"I'm confident, too," said Jones.

"And I," added Mr. King, and he took out his handkerchief and blew his nose very confidently, indeed.

"Do you hear that?" whispered a man in the crowd, "they say there's plenty of money in the bank."

"They certainly look confident," added another.

"Yes, sir," said Charlie, louder than ever. "This bank is certainly in no danger if there should be a run."

"I can put my hands on a million dollars right this minute," cried the president.

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"I can put my hands and one foot on a million dollars," said Jones, "and steer with the other foot."

"I can do anything," cried Mr. King, in a frenzy of confidence—"Look!" and he jumped up over the balcony and began walking along the very narrow railing.

"Hey, look out," whispered Charlie, "we mustn't get too confident."

"Why that's *nothing!*" cried Jones, disregarding everything. "Look at me," and he spit on his hands, took a short run and leaped for the awning over the second story window. But unfortunately he missed the awning completely, and landed on his neck in the midst of the crowd, whose mood, always quick to worship success and vice versa, changed once more to that of complete lack of confidence. It looked bad for the bank. But at that moment, a murmur of approbation swept over the multitude of depositors. Charlie looked be-



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hind him. There stood Mrs. Barbee with a shawl over her head, and in her arms lay a little baby.

"Why, it's a little baby," whispered the crowd. "Isn't that cute!"

"Aw—isn't it," said others.

Their attention was held. And then, at the psychological moment, a band appeared, playing Dixie, behind the American flag, with large banners reading "Employees' Picnic This Afternoon," and the day was saved for everybody. Except Jones.

"Poor Jones," said the president, and with these simple words, he somehow expressed the feeling about Jones of the entire business world.

Arrived back at the office, Charlie found that Edison and others had been quite busy in his absence. A complete set of push buttons had been installed, there were two filing cabinets, a basket for mail marked "Incoming,"

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one marked "Outgoing" and one which simply bore the label "Incoming—Outgoing." Three waste baskets were similarly titled—"Waste Paper—Aaaa to Kleb," "Waste Paper—Kuga to Zurop" and "Waste Paper—Personal."

Seated at a desk in one corner was a mild gentleman with gold rimmed eyeglasses, bent over a large ledger in which he was rapidly adding up columns of figures.

"I'm the Expert Accountant," he explained. "I've just installed an accounting system."

"I see," said Charlie; "and how are the accounts, this morning?"

"Bully," replied the man. "Would you like to see?"

Charlie looked. The left hand page was labeled "Receipts as of May 23," and under that was written:

"Neither a borrower or a lender be  
For a loan oft loses both itself and friend."

—SHAKESPEARE.

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Below that was:

"A penny saved is a penny earned."

—POOR RICHARD.

"I thought," explained the accountant,  
"that it would be nice to start each day with  
an appropriate quotation."

"A very good idea," said Charlie, and he  
examined the rest of the page.

Below the quotations was written:

This book is the property of Clarence Frank-  
lin Brown, 414 E. Forrest Ave., Lodge Junction,  
N. J., United States of America, World Universe.

If found, please return to owner.

Who steals this book  
Beware his life,  
For the owner carries  
A great big knife.

Clarence Brown

C. Franklin Brown

Mr. C. F. Brown, Esq.

Clarence Franklin Brown, Esq., U.S.A.

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"That's my name," explained the accountant.

“Of course it is,” replied Charlie, “and don’t you ever let any one tell you it isn’t,” and he turned to the “Expenditures” page.

Under "Expenditures as of May 23" was written:

### Expenditures as of May 23

Expenditures as of May 23

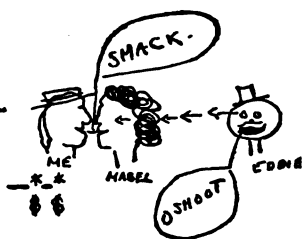


Cyrene - Love

Feb 76 -- Friendship.

Mrs. Clarence Franklin Brown Esq

How do you do, Mrs. C. F. Brown?



**Mrs. Clarence Franklin Brown, Esq.**

How do you do, Mrs. C. F. Brown?

"That's a girl I know," explained Mr. Brown.

"Yes," said Charlie, "but see here, Brown——"

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"Yes, sir," said Mr. Brown, looking up with bright eyes.

"See here," said Charlie, gruffly. "This is supposed to be a business office."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Brown. "I'm very proud to be here."

"But, damn it all, Brown——"

The accountant began to tremble a little.

"Have I done anything wrong, sir?" he asked. "I'm sorry, sir. Perhaps you could keep me—I'm a little new on the job now, but I'm sure——"

"But listen, Brown," said Charlie, pleading.

"Yes, sir," replied Brown, eagerly.

"Oh, *damn* it——" said Charlie and he pressed the push button marked "Mr. King."

They waited a minute and then Charlie pressed the button again. Then he pressed all the buttons which were labeled respectively "Napoleon," "Fire," "Plant," "Executive" and "Push." Still no one came.

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"Where the devil—" growled Charlie, in an increasingly bad humor. "There's going to be hell to pay around here."

"Please, sir," said Mr. Brown, "those buttons don't work. Edison hasn't invented electricity yet. You have to pull this rope," and he pointed to a stout cord which Edison had suspended over Charlie's desk. "Once is for Mr. King."

Charlie pulled. Outside the door there was a crash of falling pans—then silence—then a bugle call—then silence—then a band played, "God Save the King"—then the roar of a cannon.

"There'll be somebody here in a moment now, sir," said Mr. Brown.

The door opened and Mr. King entered. "You sent for me?" he asked.

Charlie nodded. He looked from Mr. King to Mr. Brown. The accountant had returned to his books. Charlie groaned. "Let's go outside a minute," he said.

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"Come in my office," said Mr. King.

As they left, Mr. Brown looked up at Charlie and smiled bravely.

"I think it's going much better, sir," he said, and Charlie groaned again.

When they reached Mr. King's office, they found Mrs. Barbee.

"Listen," said Charlie. "I'm up against it."

"Why, everything seems to be going so well," said Mr. King. "You've done wonderfully, so far. The strike settled—the run on the bank stopped—reorganization going forward at great speed—a unique advertising program——"

"Do you really think so?" asked Charlie. "Do you really think I've made good so far?"

"My boy," said Mr. King, "you've done wonders. And if the rest of the day is as much of a success—why, there's not the least doubt in the world but that the girl is yours. What's worrying you? The picnic?"

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"No," replied Charlie, shaking his head.

"What then?"

"That accountant," said Charlie. "I've got to fire him. And he's such a nice fellow."

Mr. King walked up and down the room. "I've got it," he said, at last.

"What?"

"We'll shoot him," said Mr. King.

Charlie brightened. "That wouldn't hurt his feelings so much," he said, "and besides, business is business," and then he stopped. "Will *I* have to shoot him?"

"Not at all," replied Mr. King. "I can get Napoleon's Army. Easiest thing in the world. Only," he cautioned, "we mustn't tell Napoleon. He can't bear the thought of shooting any one."

"Mr. King," said Charlie, "you're a brick."

"Not at all, my boy," said Mr. King. "Glad to do it. The only real happiness, after all, is service," and he put on his hat and left in search of the Army.

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Charlie felt a hand on his sleeve. It was Mrs. Barbee. Her eyes were full of tears. "You're so kind," she said.

Charlie blushed. "I'm not either," he said.

"Yes, you are," she repeated. "You're kind—and you're nice—and you're always a gentleman," and she went over to the desk and put her head on her arms and began to sob.

"Now, please—" said Charlie. "Please—Mrs. Barbee——"

"Don't mind me," she gulped. "Go away, please."

Charlie went up to her and put his hand on her shoulders. "Why don't you leave him?" he said. "He's just a drunk—he's just hurting you. It's so unfair."

Mrs. Barbee began to dry her eyes between sobs.

"It's so damned unfair," said Charlie. "Here you are young—and—and—beautiful—and everything—and tied to that—that——"

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Charlie clenched his fists and marched to the window. "Your whole life's ahead of you," he said. "Your whole life. And life is so grand."

"It is," cried Charlie, as though Mrs. Barbee had contradicted him. "It's grand. And it can be so full of things. Mine is going to be. And yours can be, too. I can't stand seeing you trapped like this—and caught—and unhappy—and nothing ahead—I can't stand it. You've got to go away—with some one——"

"With whom?"

Charlie was silent.

A volley of shots rang out.

"That," said Mrs. Barbee, "would be Mr. Brown."

Mr. King entered, rubbing his hands, gleefully. "Everything O. K.," he said, "and I've got a new accountant coming tomorrow. Brown's brother-in-law, by the way—so really no damage is done. And no hard feelings."

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"That's better," agreed Charlie. "Business is business, but at the same time a little humanity never hurt any organization."

"And speaking of that," said Mr. King, "how about a little lunch? It's almost two o'clock."

Charlie held up his hands. "Not for me," he said. "I just nibble a sandwich and a glass of milk in the middle of the day."

Mr. King laughed. "You business men," he said. "Coming, Mrs. Barbee?" and they left.

Charlie walked back to his office and found a sandwich and a glass of milk which he proceeded to nibble thoughtfully—that is to say—he nibbled the *sandwich* thoughtfully because, as every one knows, you can't nibble milk. You *drink* milk.

And just as he had finished, the door burst open and Mr. King rushed in.

"Are we alone?" he cried.

Charlie looked hastily under the desk, and

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in all the nooks and crannies of the filing cabinet, of which there were a great many.

"Yes," he said, at last. "What's the matter?"

"Agitators!" whispered Mr. King.

"Where?"

"Right here," replied Mr. King. "Labor Agitators. Mrs. Barbee and I sat across from them at lunch."

"But the strike is over," said Charlie.

"*That* strike is over," said Mr. King, "but you know how these Agitators are. And besides, there is a rumor that these particular ones have been sent here by a certain Jack Butterfield."

"Jack Butterfield!" exclaimed Charlie. "The man who is my rival for the hand of Judith. That must never be," and he clenched his fist until the white showed.

"Well," said Mr. King. "I would be on my guard. We can't be too sure of winning. And when the tooth paste is out of the tube,

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you can't put it back. You know that, my boy."

"Don't I, though," said Charlie. "Or at least, I'm learning. This is a wonderful experience for me."

A band began to play in the distance, then marched steadily nearer and finally, stopped under Charlie's window.

"It's the start of the picnic," said Mr. King, looking out.

Napoleon rushed in. "All aboard for the picnic," he cried, very excitedly. "Oh, it's going to be dandy, we're waiting for you."

"Where's Mrs. Barbee?" asked Charlie.

"She said she would meet us there," replied Mr. King. "I think she ran into Mr. Barbee again."

Charlie looked around the office. "Everything shipshape," he said. "Mail all signed. Files locked. Water cooler bucket emptied. Gentlemen—at your service," and they marched out.

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A barouche was waiting. Charlie and Mr. King stepped in. Napoleon went on ahead, where his Army was standing. The band struck up, "Hail to the Chief," and the procession moved on.

Arrived at the picnic grounds, the parade disbanded and they were handed a badge and a ticket. The badge read "Annual Employees' Outing." The ticket entitled them to one glass of lemonade, one plate of ice cream or both, one admission to the baseball game and one ride on the Little Madcap.

"It's an invention of Edison's," explained Mr. King.

Many people were strolling among the trees or sitting on the grass but Charlie recognized only a few. Don Quixote was in the distance, followed by a crowd of children. The Chairman and Napoleon were drinking something out of a bottle with a straw. Every one seemed to be having a good time, and every one seemed glad to be there and glad Charlie was

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there. Charlie felt quite a sudden wave of liking for all of them.

Mrs. Barbee was not to be seen, nor was Sally, the mountaineer's daughter.

They wandered over toward the crowd around Edison's "Little Madcap." There were great shouts of laughter and rightly so. The Little Madcap was a large barrel suspended on a movable shaft. On presenting one's ticket, one was seated in the barrel, the lid was clamped down, and the whole crowd rushed for the crank. At a given signal, they began to turn and the barrel began to revolve. By looking through a glass window in the barrel, the man in charge could tell as soon as the rider was becoming sick and could speed it up accordingly. Sometimes it took three or four minutes for the person enjoying the Little Madcap, to get sick, and if a man lasted five minutes, he was entitled to another ride, willy nilly. If he refused, the crowd became very

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hostile and threatened to send him into "coventry."

Edison was not visible.

"He's over fixing up the balloon ascension," explained the man in charge, so they walked in that direction.

Edison's balloon, a huge affair, was slightly different from the ordinary type. Instead of gas, it was being filled with hot air from a large fire directly underneath the mouth. Edison, in leather jacket, goggles and knickerbockers, was very busy directing the details but as soon as he saw Charlie and Mr. King, he came over to them, his eyes sparkling with fanatical enthusiasm.

"It's going to work," he cried. "Think of what that means! Man has conquered the air—the air, do you understand? Why it's unbelievable!"

Charlie had never seen the old man quite so excited. Edison left them and rushed back to the bag which was now quite full and with

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the help of several bystanders, fastened it with ropes to a basket.

"My God," said Charlie, "He's not really going to try it?" for Edison was climbing in.

Charlie ran up and grabbed the basket. It was filled with two weeks' provisions from the kitchen—canned goods, a side of ham, oranges, bananas, loaves of bread, salt, sugar, a rifle, a telescope, portable writing desk, and any number of books and magazines.

"Listen, Edison," cried Charlie. "Please listen—I think you're a swell guy—but it can't possibly work. You'll just break your neck."

The inventor looked at him, and Charlie suddenly felt very ashamed and let go of the basket.

"Goodbye, everybody," cried the old man.

"Goodbye," they cried. "Don't forget to write."

"Oh, my God," said Charlie, tensely.

The bag slowly rose. The crowd cheered. Edison smiled and bowed. There was much

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enthusiasm. Then the balloon immediately came down again on the exact spot where it had gone up.

"A bully landing," cried Charlie, rushing up. "Let me be the first to congratulate you."

Edison seemed a little dazed. "It moves, nevertheless," he muttered, "*e pur si muove*."

"A triumph," said Mr. King, taking his hand.

"Do you really think so?" he asked.

Edison climbed out. The crowd cheered louder than ever. He took off his goggles and leather cap, and bowed in acknowledgment.

"It's just the beginning," he said. "Just the beginning. You wait."

The cheers redoubled.

"Ah, my friends," said the inventor, "You mustn't cheer for me. Cheer, my friends—but cheer for the failures—those who have gone before and made the path easier."

And then he turned to Charlie. "You doubted," he said.

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"But listen——"

"Thomas," said the old man. "Doubting Thomas."

"Well," said Charlie. "I'm glad you're back, anyway. We missed you terribly. And did you have any trouble coming through the Customs?"

Edison grinned and gave Charlie a shove. "Go away," he said. "You're a young rogue—and you don't respect your elders."

By this time the balloon had quite collapsed. The lady reporter who had interviewed Charlie in the morning pushed her way through the crowd. "Are you Edison?" she asked Charlie.

"No," he replied. "My name's Hatch."

"Where is Edison?" she asked.

Charlie pointed to Mr. King.

"Are you Edison?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Mr. King.

"I'm a reporter," she said.

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"The future of ballooning," began Mr. King, "lies in the air——"

"I must put that down," said the reporter, taking out her notebook.

Napoleon rushed up and grabbed Charlie. "You're wanted immediately," he said, "for the Executive's Golf Match."

"But my clubs——"

"That's all right," said Napoleon. "They're waiting for you."

When Charlie reached the first tee, he found a large crowd listening to the band. Napoleon blew a whistle and the music stopped. Charlie was handed his driver by a tall caddy and the crowd waited.

"Do I drive first?" asked Charlie.

"Yes," replied Napoleon. So Charlie stepped forward, teed up his ball amid an impressive silence, and prepared to drive.

As he swung back, however, the band suddenly blared forth into the "Stars and Stripes

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Forever," by Sousa, and Charlie's effort, as a result, went considerably to the left of where he had intended it to go.

"Hurrah!" cried the crowd, enthusiastically, and they began to form a procession behind the band, with Napoleon's Army in the lead. Next came the fire department and a delegation of young girls in white dresses and blue sashes, followed by a float representing "Labor" and another bearing "Queen Socko and her Court." Immediately behind, there was a barouche, in which was proudly seated Mr. King, in a silk hat, bowing happily to left and right.

Finally came an empty carriage.

"That's for us," whispered Napoleon, excitedly.

"But—" said Charlie, "who else is playing golf? Where's my opponents?"

"There aren't any," cried Napoleon. "This is the Executive's Golf Match. Isn't it a dandy idea? I got it all up myself," so he and

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Charlie and the caddy climbed into the carriage and the procession moved forward.

"Did you see my ball?" Charlie asked the caddy.

"No, sir," replied the caddy. "I'm very near-sighted. I can see fine to read, though." And then he added, "I've got some glasses—but they make me look terrible. Like a professor."

The procession broke up after Charlie's third shot. The band played "Auld Lang Syne" and Charlie bravely pushed on alone, accompanied by his caddy, a dozen new balls, and hearty cries of "Godspeed."

After a while, he began to look ahead for the first green but nothing was as yet in sight. And ten minutes later, as he prepared to take his eleventh shot, he suddenly heard some one cursing terribly in the bushes over to his right.

"There's somebody in the quicksands, I guess," said his caddy.

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"The quicksands?" asked Charlie.

"It's a hazard," explained the caddy. "Somebody gets lost in there almost every time. They're generally never seen again," he added.

"Quite a hazard," remarked Charlie, breaking into a run.

"They say it's the sportiest course around here," said the caddy, proudly.

Charlie reached the quicksands just as an unknown lady, struggling frantically, had sunk up to her waist.

"Here's a rope," said the caddy, taking one out of the bag. "They generally use a rope on this hole;" and together they succeeded in lassoing and pulling the lady slowly out of the treacherous marsh.

"I'm in the Publicity Department," she explained, as soon as she had reached dry land, "and here is the scenario you wanted for that moving picture advertising scheme."

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"Oh, yes," said Charlie, "the one Dante was going to do."

"Mr. Dante," explained the lady, "has never seen any moving pictures and he's very busy rehearsing the play for tonight. So I did it for him—I've had quite a bit of experience along that line—I mean along the line of seeing movies."

"Good," said Charlie and he took up the scenario.

"It's sort of been influenced," said the lady, "by the various pictures I've seen—the parts I liked."

"I see," said Charlie and he began:

"'The Passion Flower of Broadway.'"

"That's the title," explained the lady. "I thought it would be better than just, 'The Life of Calvin Coolidge,' or something like that."

"Oh, much," said Charlie.

"Then there's sort of an historical introduction," said the lady, and Charlie read:

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The story of Man is the story of the gradual evolution of history down the ages. But through it all has come slowly and surely the realization that in order to live, Man must breathe. This picture is the story of one Man's breath.

Note: All the historical incidents in this picture are correct except the shooting of Judas by a Greek soldier and the discovery of the North Pole by General Grant.

TITLE: "NO."

"No, what?" asked Charlie, looking over the paper. "Have I omitted anything?"

"Not at all," said the lady. "That's just my way of plunging right into the middle of the story. She says 'No' to Nero."

"Who says 'No' to Nero?"

"The Christian slave who later becomes Walter's stenographer."

"That was a long time to wait for a stenographer," said Charlie. "It would almost have been quicker to have written it in longhand."

"You go ahead and you'll understand," said the lady.

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So Charlie went ahead.

TITLE: "NO."

Scene: A Public Bath in Rome. Nero is taking a bath. (Comedy touch—can't find soap.) Christians are being burned as torches. Two Christians speak.

TITLE: "I HOPE HE GETS SOAP IN HIS EYES."

TITLE: "SO DO I."

Scene: Same. Nero gets soap in eyes. Christians laugh. Nero shakes fist at them and threatens to come out of bath. Can't come out because there are ladies present. Makes signs meaning "If there weren't ladies present, I'd come out and show you."

TITLE: "SHOW US WHAT?"

"That's a little risky, isn't it?" asked Charlie.

"You mean people would think it was beneath a Christian's dignity to argue with Nero?" asked the lady.

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"Oh, all right," said Charlie, and he read on.

Scene: Same. Amaryllis, a Christian slave girl, comes in. Doesn't see Nero in bath and begins to undress. (Comedy touch—can't untie shoe.) Close up of Nero's face in bath. Close up of Capitol at Washington.

"Why that?" asked Charlie.

"For contrast," replied the lady.

Scene: Interior of the White House. President Coolidge having breakfast.

TITLE: "NO OATMEAL FOR ME,  
THANK YOU."

Scene: Roman bath again. Christians make signs meaning, "Say, lady, I wouldn't undress around here, if I was you."

TITLE: "WHY NOT?"

Scene: Same. Amaryllis looks around and sees Nero. Screams. Nero smiles.

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**TITLE: "OH, DON'T BE SILLY."**

**Scene:** Same. Slow fade out, with Nero's lustful eyes the last thing on the screen. Fade in. The eyes become the headlights of an automobile, then the red and green lights of a drug store, then once more Nero's eyes and face.

**TITLE: "WELL, HERE WE ARE AGAIN!"**

**Scene:** Close up of Nero's face. The face suddenly begins to whirl rapidly and dissolves into long shot of ocean.

**TITLE: "THOUSANDS GATHER FOR  
ANNUAL ELK CONVENTION  
WHILE GLOUCESTER FISHING  
SMACK GOES AGROUND OFF  
MONTAUK POINT, N. J."**

"Those news reels are very popular," explained the lady.

**Scene:** Long shot of ocean. Long shot of schooner. Then close up of ocean. Then close up of schooner in ocean. Close up of cabin on

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schooner. Close up of kitten in cabin on schooner in ocean. Close up of face of kitten in cabin on schooner. Close up of nose on face of kitten in cabin on schooner in ocean.

**TITLE: "YOU CAN'T GET THEM MUCH SMALLER THAN THIS AND STILL MAKE SENSE."**

**Scene: Fade out. Fade into Ford factory at Detroit.**

**TITLE: "RALPH, A SUCCESSFUL ATTORNEY WHO KNEW ONLY TWO KINDS OF WOMEN—AND DESPISED THEM BOTH."**

**Scene: Interior of Ford factory. (Comedy touch—Mr. Ford.) The men are at work. Ralph enters, dressed for tea. There is no tea.**

**TITLE: ASSEMBLING THE CHASSIS."**

**Scene: Same. Ralph watches workmen and makes signs to them meaning—"There are only two kinds of women and I despise them both." The workmen laugh. Ralph, encouraged, takes**

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out handkerchief, coin and pencil and does trick.

**TITLE: "I CAN MAKE SHADOW PICTURES, TOO."**

Scene: Same. Ralph makes shadow pictures on wall.

**TITLE: "A RABBIT."**

Scene: Same. Ralph makes papa rabbit and twelve little rabbits.

**TITLE: "THE SAME RABBIT SLOWED DOWN 25 TIMES."**

Scene: Same, only with slow motion pictures. Then scene dissolves into meadow full of rabbits listening to radio playing appropriate selection. (Any tune of a familiar or semi-classical nature will do.)

**TITLE: "MRS. RABBIT—DEAREST,  
DID YOU LIKE THOSE  
BISCUITS I MADE THIS  
MORNING?"**

**MIKE—SURE AND OI DID.**

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## *The Crazy Fool*

**BUT I DON'T LOIKE YOUR  
MOTHER-IN-LAW."**

*—Literary Digest.*

**TITLE: "AND SO, THROUGH THE  
LONG WINTER NIGHT——"**

"Then," said the lady, "there would be a number of scenes of the Egyptians crossing the Red Sea and it would all gradually lead toward the big ball at Nancy's house that night and then the buffaloes would become pannicky and stampede, of course——"

"Of course," echoed Charlie.

"And that," said the lady triumphantly, "would lead to the marriage."

"Of the buffaloes?" asked Charlie.

"Of course not," replied the lady. "Of Paul and Edith."

"Is that all?" asked Charlie.

"Yes," she replied. "You see, there really ought to be that happy ending, oughtn't there?"

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"Yes," replied Charlie, "but there's just one thing. Where does our product come in?"

"Ah," said the lady, "that comes in at the end. That's the big surprise."

"I see," said Charlie. "And what is the surprise?"

"I haven't thought of it yet," replied the lady. But I'm going to work on it tonight," and she gathered up her manuscript and prepared to leave.

"Good," said Charlie, "and if I were you, I'd go this way—there's a big quicksand over there."

"Oh, that's right," said the lady. "I forgot all about it," and giving her employer a grateful look, she walked rapidly away in the right direction and Charlie returned to his golf match.

By the time he had taken five more shots, he was out of sight and sound of every one. In the distance, somewhere to the right and in the rear, he could still hear the band, and

## *The Crazy Fool*

there came to him, from time to time, an occasional faint roar of excited voices from the direction of the baseball field.

"Say," he said to the caddy, as he prepared for his twenty-first stroke, "you're sure there is a first hole?"

"I think so," said the caddy. "And if there isn't, we'll be the first to know about it."

"Say, listen," began Charlie, and then he stopped and commenced running to the left. He had heard a cry—the cry of a woman in distress—the cry of a voice he recognized. In a minute, he was there. And in ten seconds more he had knocked Mr. Barbee down.

"There," he said, "that settles *that*."

Mrs. Barbee looked up from the ground where she had slipped in trying to avoid her husband's fist and, recognizing Charlie, she suddenly began to laugh somewhat hysterically.

"What is it?" asked Charlie, breathing hard.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Did he hurt you? Are you hurt? What happened?"

"Nothing," she replied.

Mr. Barbee got slowly up off the ground.

"That will teach you," said Charlie, "to respect a lady."

Mr. Barbee picked up his green fedora hat with the feather in it, put it on, said nothing to Mrs. Barbee and walked away. After she had calmed down somewhat, she said, "He got tight again. And I thought the best thing to do would be to take him for a walk. And just before you came, he got nasty about you—and tried to make me promise not to see you—and then he began to beat me——"

"Well," said Charlie. "I've fixed that all right. He won't do that again."

Mrs. Barbee was silent.

"Yes, sir," said Charlie, a little exultantly, "that will teach him a lesson."

Still Mrs. Barbee said nothing.



## *The Crazy Fool*

"Everything's fine, then," said Charlie hopefully.

"Yes," said Mrs. Barbee, "everything's fine. You've fixed everything. The run on the bank—the strike—and now my problem."

Charlie and the caddy picked Mrs. Barbee up and Charlie brushed off her skirt, and they started back over the golf course.

"You've got to get away," cried Charlie. "I can't stand this."

Mrs. Barbee laughed. "I'm tired, Charlie," she said.

"By God!" said Charlie. "You can go away with me. I can give you the kind of life you need. I can't stand to see you cry like that—I can't stand to see anybody so unhappy."

"And Judith?"

Charlie paused. "Judith would understand," he said, "and wait. Love like Judith's never dies."

Mrs. Barbee looked at Charlie. Then she walked over and stood up on her tiptoes and

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kissed his cheek, and they walked on. Then, just before they reached the Lodge, they came out into the baseball field where, as a feature of the Outing, a hot game was in progress between the team representing Charlie's product and the boys of the Riverdale Military Academy. The two teams had been close rivals for years, and this was the deciding game. The score was 3 to 0 in favor of Riverdale; Charlie's men were at bat in the last half of the ninth inning; two were out. And then Ames, the Riverdale pitcher, in a moment of overconfidence, allowed the next two men to hit safely; there was an error; and before the Military Academy boys could recover, the bases were full and the Socko supporters were frantic.

But, unfortunately, Boppo, the next man to bat, was Socko's weakest hitter. All groaned, for Boppo had batted .037 all year and .009 the year before. And then, suddenly, the Socko captain saw Charlie standing there be-

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side Mrs. Barbee and at the same moment, Charlie saw, from the look in the captain's eyes, what was wanted.

"Excuse me a minute," he said to Mrs. Barbee, and he began to take off his coat. The captain ran up to him.

"Will you?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Charlie. "I will."

A cheer greeted the umpire's announcement. "Hatch batting for Boppo," and then an intense hush and Charlie stepped to the plate.

The Riverdale pitcher, who was also a high stand man in his studies, wound up and delivered. As it came toward him, Charlie suddenly thought of Sally, the mountain girl, and decided to let it go by.

"Strike one," called the umpire, a Mr. Lambert.

The Riverdale crowd roared their approval; the Socko boys were silent.

Once more the pitcher tied himself into a knot and then hurled a slow "teaser" which

## *The Crazy Fool*

seemed to float its soft, easy way across the plate. Just before it reached him, Charlie stepped forward. "For Mrs. Barbee," he said, and swung with all his might, and missed.

"Strike two," cried Mr. Lambert.

The Riverdale supporters went crazy. Cowbells and whistles and taunts mingled with the Riverdale cheer which went:

"Riverdale."

The Socko adherents were sunk in gloom. The Outing was over and most of the picnickers had now gathered together along the first-base line. The sun was sinking in the west and so were their hopes, and many began to leave disconsolately as though they could not bear to stay for the unhappy ending.

Charlie stepped away from the plate, rubbed his hands in the dirt, pulled his golf cap down over his eyes, grasped his bat and faced the pitcher.

"I can't fail now," he said. "I can't."

And then, just above the right field fence,

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he seemed to see a face—the face of Judith. And she was holding out her arms and saying, “Hit it to me, Charlie.”

The pitcher unwound. The ball shot toward the plate, Charlie stepped forward.

Crash!

All three of the runners on bases started at that sound. The Riverdale right fielder began running back, his hands outstretched. When he got to the fence, he stopped and watched the ball sail over. It was a clean home run!

Pandemonium broke loose. The Socko team, the Socko rooters, everybody, rushed onto the diamond. And as Charlie crossed the plate with the winning score, he was seized and lifted to their shoulders and almost mobbed by the crowd of happy, shouting people—his people.

It was almost dark when he finally got to the shower. And as he stood there, naked, and let the sharp, cool water play on his firm,

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## *The Crazy Fool*

smooth body, he was very happy, and he began to sing. And then, for no reason at all, he leaped up to the bar above the shower and chinned himself twenty-four times.

But as he was drying himself into a pink glow, Mr. King suddenly knocked and entered. He looked very worried.

"What's the matter?" asked Charlie. "Did the Chairman beat you both?"

"No," said Mr. King, "we never got to the first hole. It got dark."

"That makes two 'gots' in one sentence," said Charlie.

"I know it," said Mr. King, "but we must put that off until later. Right now, there is the old Ned to pay, I fear."

"Hasn't he been paid yet?" asked Charlie.

"Hatch, my boy," said Mr. King, "you must be serious."

"I know it," said Charlie, "but I feel so good."

"Hatch," went on Mr. King, "those agi-

## *The Crazy Fool*

tators are up to something tonight. They are bound and determined that you shall not make good, inherit your uncle's fortune, and marry Judith."

"And I am bound that I shall," said Charlie, pulling on his underwear with a determination that boded no good for any one who crossed his path. "What's their game?"

"I don't know," said Mr. King. "But we have found out through channels best known to us that it was they who have been responsible for the many stronge happenings around here recently—the mysterious fires at the railroad station, the matches in the bath-tub, the long drought, the failure of the bread to rise this morning."

"It should get an alarm clock," said Charlie. "Anything else?"

"Yes," said Mr. King. "My hay fever has come back."

"The beasts!" cried Charlie. "Will they stop at nothing?"

## *The Crazy Fool*

"I'm afraid not," said Mr. King, shaking his head. "And all the telephone wires have been cut as though with some blunt instrument like a knife. We are out of communication with the world—and I don't like the looks of those clouds over there," and Mr. King pointed to some very peculiar black clouds in the east.

Charlie, as though to show them he didn't care, defiantly selected a black necktie for his Tuxedo, and the clouds got even blacker than ever.

"I have it," said Mr. King at last. "We'll give a masquerade."

"Capital," said Charlie.

"Washington," replied Mr. King, quickly.

"I wasn't asking a question," said Charlie. "But now I shall. Why should we give a masquerade?"

"Because," said Mr. King. "Listen. The agitators are disguised, aren't they?"

"Yes," replied Charlie.

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"Well," said Mr. King, "we'll give a masquerade. Then promptly at twelve o'clock at a given signal, everybody will have to unmask—and we can discover the agitators."

"But maybe they won't unmask," said Charlie.

"Then they won't be asked to any more masquerades," replied Mr. King, "and above everything else, people fear social ostracism. Agitators are just human, after all."

"They aren't," said Charlie. "They're Bolsheviks. How does that tie look?"

"Splendid!" said Mr. King. "But why are you dressing?"

"For the banquet," replied Charlie. "There's to be a banquet for the Sales Force."

"Yes, I know," said Mr. King, "but if you appear in a Tuxedo, don't you suppose they will all think you are trying to put on airs?"

"By God," said Charlie. "That's a serious problem," and he sat down to think it over.

"Who told you to dress?" asked Mr. King.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"A man I met on the stairs," replied Charlie.

"I thought so," said Mr. King. "It's a plot—a plot to discredit you in the eyes of the Sales Force—and through them in the eyes of Mr. Pratt."

Charlie tore off his stiff shirt and studs.

"Incidentally," said Mr. King, "no word has been received from Mr. Pratt."

Charlie turned pale. "Then that means—" he said, "that I haven't made good?"

Mr. King did not answer at once. "No," he finally said, "not yet. We may hear any time. There's one wire that isn't down, and I'm keeping a man at that, day and night."

Charlie sank into a chair. "Well," he said, "I've done my best."

"A man can do no more," said Mr. King.

"You'll let me know the moment you hear anything?"

"Absolutely," said Mr. King, and he patted Charlie on the back and left the room.

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Charlie sat for some time in a discouraged attitude—without stirring. Then he suddenly leaped up, began to whistle, put the studs back in his dress shirt, pulled it over his head and finished dressing in his Tuxedo. But as a slight mark of concession to the democracy of the Sales Force, he wore a belt instead of suspenders and cut himself twice while shaving.

The banquet was scheduled for six-thirty, but it was nearly eight before they sat down. Charlie, at the speakers' table, was between Mr. King and Napoleon. The latter gentleman, because of the impediment to his speech, had been engaged as toastmaster. An orchestra, hidden behind a large artificial globe of goldfish, discoursed appropriate music during the evening. Between courses, led by a former Y. M. C. A. worker, all the guests heartily joined in the choruses of the various Socko songs, which were to be found printed on the back of the menu. The songs them-

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selves were clever adaptations of various well known hymns or ballads in which the word "Socko" had been ingeniously inserted in different places, as, for example, the song, "While We Are Marching Through Georgia," was enthusiastically rendered, as "While We Are Marching Through Socko," and "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes" became something quite different and more appropriate.

Charlie's opportunity to make a speech occurred sooner than he had expected. After the salad, they naturally stood and sang "America," and during the last verse, the head waiter suddenly appeared with a very white face at Napoleon's elbow and whispered something into the general's ear.

"Oh, dear!" said Napoleon, and he, too, turned quite pale.

"What is it?" whispered Charlie.

"Something terrible," replied Napoleon. "Wait till this verse is over." So when they

## *The Crazy Fool*

had finished, he leaned over and said, "There isn't any ice cream."

"What!" cried Charlie. "Impossible!"

"Shhh," said Napoleon, and then he added, "Oh, what will we do—what will we *do*?"

"It's those agitators again," whispered Mr. King.

"It is, eh?" And Charlie's reply came quick as a flash: "Sing another verse of 'America.'"

So Napoleon gave the signal, and the song leader began another stanza, while Charlie thought and thought and thought.

The song came to an end.

"Another verse," commanded Charlie, still thinking.

"But there aren't any more verses."

"Then sing the first one again," and the song leader was notified.

"Now a lot of you fellows," bellowed the song leader, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, "didn't put into that verse the real old Socko pep. I saw three or four fellows

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who weren't singing at all. Now I'm going to give you another chance. The first verse again, everybody—and get into it. You fellows over there by the door. Everybody. Come on now, boys—show Mr. Hatch what you've got."

The song started again and before it was finished, Charlie knew what to do. At the conclusion, he arose and held up his hand for silence.

"Thank you, men," he said. "That's the stuff I like to see. That's the real Socko punch, with a kick in it—wish we had some tonight, eh, men? (Laughter.) But, of course, I don't mean that, because no one is more heartily in favor of law enforcement than I. (Applause.) What I do want to tell you, men, is that I've got a surprise for you tonight—a pleasant surprise. I don't mean the speeches—I said a *pleasant* surprise. (Laughter.) And of course, I was only joking about that, too, men, because you'll go

## *The Crazy Fool*

a long ways before you hear better speeches than you are going to hear tonight from our own Socko boys (applause) of whom I am very proud to be one. (Prolonged applause.) No, men, the surprise is simply this. The company has decided that it wants to do something for you—something which will show you that we are thinking of you all the time, and that your welfare is always at the bottom of every move we make. And yesterday, men—only yesterday, mind you—we discovered, quite by accident, that certain foods are harmful especially if eaten at the end of banquets. We discovered that over 88 per cent of the people who died last year had, at one time or another, attended a banquet where ice cream was served. And so at great cost, both of time and money, we have arranged tonight this little surprise—purely as a service to you men—a service for which we ask nothing in return save your gratitude. Gentlemen of the Socko Sales Force, I take great pleasure and

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pride in announcing tonight that in your honor there will be no ice cream!"

There was a moment of silence and then a great outburst of applause, and Charlie sat down.

"Three cheers for Mr. Hatch," called Mr. King, and they were given with a will, especially by those employees at the tables near the speakers.

Charlie leaped to his feet. "Boys," he cried, "I'm 'Charlie' to you tonight!"

"Three cheers for 'Charlie,'" and those were given.

"You're a wonder," said Mr. King.

"Any news from Mr. Pratt?" whispered Charlie, mopping his brow.

Mr. King grew grave and shook his head.

After the coffee and cigars, Napoleon arose and beat on the table for silence and the speeches, as usual, began with Congressman Burke, who was as impressive and unfortunate as ever. Charlie did not really hear any of



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the speakers who followed because he was quite completely engrossed in going over and over the beginning of his own speech, and finally, after what seemed an interminable length of time, he heard himself mentioned by Napoleon, as "That young man who has come to us, like young Lochinvar in the poem—you remember——"

" 'Oh, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,  
In all the wide border his steed is the best.' "

And Napoleon proceeded to recite the whole poem, at the end of which there was a certain amount of applause. "Would you like to hear another?" he asked, pleased, and without waiting, he announced——

"The Burial of Sir John More"

and recited that. This was followed by "The Wreck of the Hesperus," and other favorites of Napoleon, and it was almost ten o'clock

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before Charlie finally got an opportunity to rise and bow.

"Gentlemen of the Sales Department," he began. "A little over two score years ago—" and then there was a sudden blinding flash, a terrible roar and the room was filled with smoke, flying chandeliers, and confusion. Mr. King pulled Charlie down under the table.

"Let me go," cried Charlie, excitedly. "I'm not afraid of the——"

"Agitators!" said Mr. King. "Are you hurt, boy?"

"No," said Charlie. "But now it will throw them out of the mood for my speech—and I've worked awfully hard on that speech, the lousy bastards—and now they'll say I didn't make good——"

Charlie broke away from Mr. King and leaped over the table, defiantly. Gradually the smoke cleared. The hall was almost empty, but anxious faces of departed guests were peering back through the doorways.

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Then suddenly, in one corner, Charlie saw a large, square, black box standing on a tripod.

"There's the infernal machine," he cried. The remaining guests scattered as Charlie bravely rushed forward. He grabbed the box and hastily threw it out of the window. There was no explosion. Charlie, disappointed, looked around for something else to throw out and his gaze fell on an old man lying in the corner.

"Why, Edison," he cried, rushing up. "Did they get you, too?"

The inventor stirred and opened his eyes. "It was a little strong," he said, "but it worked," and he smiled, triumphantly.

"What worked?" asked Charlie, and then suddenly the meaning of the black box dawned on him. "Oh, my God!" he cried. "He's invented photography."

"What hath God wrought?" said the old man, trying to get up.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Here, let me help you," said Charlie.

"I'm all right," said Edison, proudly.  
"Where's my camera? Damn it, boy, where's my camera?"

"I'll get it," said Charlie, and he leaped through the window. When he came back, with the box under his arm, Edison had become unconscious. They picked him up tenderly and carried him to his room.

"He'll be all right," said the doctor.

"Are you sure?" asked Charlie, anxiously.

"My camera," moaned the old man. "God damn it, give me my camera!"

"Is there anything I can do? Anything at all?"

"No, nothing," said the doctor.

"I'll sit with him," said Charlie.

"No, that's all right," said the doctor. "You go on downstairs and enjoy yourself."

"How is he?" asked Mr. King anxiously when Charlie got downstairs.

"He'll be all right," said Charlie, and then

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## *The Crazy Fool*

he added, "Gee, he's a swell guy. And still no word from——?"

Mr. King shook his head.

"Where's Napoleon?" asked an anxious voice behind them. "For pity's sake, where's Napoleon?"

It was Dante, looking desperately pale and sick.

"What's the matter?" asked Mr. King. "You look like——"

"I am," said Dante. "My play's all ready—and the audience is waiting and I can't find my two leading actors—Napoleon and—Edison—and the lights won't work—and one of the scene shifters is drunk—and so help me God if I ever write another play."

"Well," said Mr. King, "Edison is in bed——"

"Oh, my God!" cried Dante.

"And as for Napoleon—the last I saw of him he went through the window out into

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the vegetable garden when that explosion went off—he hates explosions worse than anything in the world—I doubt if he comes back for half an hour.”

“But the audience is waiting——”

“I have it!” said Charlie for the eleventh time that day. “I used to act in plays at prep school—I’ll take Napoleon’s part—and Mr. King here can be Edison.”

“But you don’t know your lines,” protested Dante.

• “Oh, that’s all right,” said Charlie. “Just you give us a general idea of the play and we’ll make up the lines as we go—lots of actors do that.”

Dante sank his head into his hands and rocked back and forth. Finally he raised his face and said, “All right—but God keep me if I ever——”

“Hurry up,” said Charlie. “What’s it all about? Who am I and what do I do?”

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"I'll tell you while you're dressing," said Dante, and they rushed off.

While Charlie was putting on his costume, Mr. King came out in front of the curtain and announced that there would be a short delay, and also that immediately after the performance there would be a masked ball, or a masquerade, at which handsome prizes would be awarded for the most beautifully dressed lady and gentleman, and also a prize for the most original costume.

The audience, without waiting to hear more, rushed eagerly out of the theater to their rooms, in order to prepare for the ball. In less than half an hour, they were back in their seats, Princesses sitting next to Monks, Puritans elbowing Pagans and all very much excited.

Behind the curtain, Dante nervously walked up and down to make sure that everything was in its proper place—that every one knew

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their cues—that the properties were ready—that the revolver was loaded. Charlie, peeping through a hole in the curtain, caught the audience's excitement and began a dance with Mrs. Barbee.

"That's hardly the mood, Mr. Hatch," said Dante, with grim eyes. "Remember—you're the young man in love with the young wife of a rich, old man— You're tragic figures—you two—caught in the world's tragedy—tortured—not dancers."

"Well, we can dance pretty well, too," said Charlie. "We can do a swell torture dance."

"Please, Mr. Hatch," said Dante.

Everything seemed ready, and Dante, with a final look around, stepped out in front of the curtain. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, when the buzz of excited conversation had died down. "You are about to witness a play. This play reflects life. The stage is a mirror of life. I am the dramatist. I hold the mir-

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ror up to you and you see yourselves as you are. This play is, therefore, a tragedy."

Softly, in the next room, a jazz band began to play. The steady beat of a tom-tom—then the rhythm of two tenor banjos—and above it all, slowly the song of the muted cornet carrying the melody.

The audience lifted up its nose, pricked up its ears and began to sway, softly, where it crouched.

Dante became pale with anger, but controlled himself.

"And so, my friends," he said, "you shall next witness, instead of a comedy, a tragedy. A tragedy which will perhaps make us realize the sorrow which stalks on the earth—make us feel sorry for the poor creatures who, like us, are caught—make us——"

The audience had raised itself slowly up, still swaying from side to side to the beating rhythm of the drum. And then the music grew louder—two pianos crashed in—a saxo-

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phone—and a trombone. It began to snarl—and blare—and the audience began to writhe and raise its arms—and move its body.

“Make us,” screamed Dante, “feel sorry for everybody in the world, do you hear?” And he shook his fist at the audience and the audience suddenly, by way of feeling sorry for everybody in the world, began to dance.

“You fools!” cried Dante, and then the curtain suddenly went up behind him and the stage was also full of dancers—dancers who had been cast for his tragedy.

And so began the masquerade.

It was Mrs. Barbee who stopped Dante as he rushed for his revolver. “Don’t you see they’re right,” she cried, “and you’re wrong? They don’t want to be told they’re tragic. They want to dance. And they’re right. My God—life’s terrible enough, isn’t it, without you trying to make us feel sorry for ourselves—or scaring us to death—come on, dance. That’s all you *can* do—dance and laugh—

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you're an American, too—and, anyway, those are blank cartridges—I've got some real ones for myself if you ever want any."

The masquerade grew wilder. Some one brought in a huge bowl of punch from somewhere.

"Edison's latest invention," said Mr. King, handing Charlie a glass, "and his best."

"Say, listen," said Charlie, after a swallow. "What's in that?"

Mr. King winked. "It's the same formula," he replied, "that he used for the flashlight powder."

"And the steam roller," said Charlie, "in equal parts, with a dash of——"

"Have another?" asked Mr. King.

"Not now," replied Charlie. "I've got to maybe do a lot of thinking between now and morning."

"My name's King," said Mr. King, "Horace King, and I live here at the Lodge and I wish you would sort of see that I get

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to bed tonight because I think you are a grand young man and the bicarbonate of soda is on the second shelf in my bathroom."

"You haven't by any chance," said Charlie, "heard from Mr. Pratt?"

"Not yet," said Mr. King, "but it still lacks half an hour to midnight—and while there's life, young man, there's hope."

"There's certainly a lot of life here," said Charlie, and he started off to look for Mrs. Barbee.

As he stepped outside the door, a lady rushed up to him. "Hurry," she cried, "there's a woman trying to commit suicide—at the bridge."

"Mrs. Barbee?" and Charlie began frantically to run toward the river—without waiting for the answer.

"No," called the other.

And when he got to the bridge the lady he found was a stranger and she was standing in

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the center of the structure with a revolver in her hand, crying bitterly.

Charlie rushed up to her. "What's the matter?" he gasped. She turned and looked at him and the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"I haven't got the guts," she said. "I haven't got the guts."

Charlie took the revolver from her limp hand.

"I'm Cleopatra," she said, "but she had the guts to quit and I haven't, and I want to quit—Oh, Christ, I want to quit!"

"Why?" asked Charlie, but the lady only sank to the bridge, sobbing.

"Go on, please," was all she said. "Go on, please—leave me alone."

Charlie walked slowly back toward the Lodge. Half way there he met a man staggering down the road laughing to himself. When he saw Charlie, he stopped and tried to balance himself.

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"Hello," he said. "Who are you?"

"I'm Hatch."

"Well, shake, Hatch—don't know you—you don't know me—everybody says you're a good fellow—I'm a good fellow—you know—good fellow—just unhappy—that's all, Hatch—you unhappy?"

"No," said Charlie.

"That's fine," replied the other. "You know, that's fine—don't get unhappy, Hatch—See—don't get unhappy—thing to do, Hatch, is be Peter Pan—you be Peter Pan and never grow up—see—and I'll be Wendy—big idea—big idea, Hatch—make lots of money—no, money don't help, Hatch, either—I got lot money—you know who I am, Hatch——?"

"No," replied Charlie.

"You know who I am," he repeated. "I'm Romeo——"

"Romeo!" said Charlie. "Where's Juliet?"  
Romeo began to laugh.

"That's the big laugh," he said. "Always



## *The Crazy Fool*

wait for the big laugh, Hatch. Always wait—you know—and the big laugh is—I married Juliet—six years ago—I married her—see—that's the big laugh."

"I don't get you," said Charlie.

"Don't get me?" he said. "All right, Hatch—you're good fellow—I'm good fellow—you married, Hatch?—nothing personal——"

"No," replied Charlie. "Not yet."

"All right, Hatch," said Romeo. "Nothing personal—I'm getting sleepy, Hatch—always get sleepy—you know—always get sleepy—big laugh—wait for big laugh——"

His voice trailed off into nothingness and he staggered on and sank slowly onto a bench where the Motorman and Conductor were sitting and talking together. Charlie walked on. And just before he reached the door, he saw Mrs. Barbee. She was standing there, leaning against a tree, watching the dancers. She wasn't crying but there was something in her

## *The Crazy Fool*

face—something eager and at the same time hopeless, as though she wanted to dance and was tired—and couldn't quite understand.

"Hello," said Charlie.

She turned quickly and became Mrs. Barbee.

"Want to dance?" asked Charlie.

She shook her head.

"Come on," said Charlie.

"No," and then she added, "Thank you."

Charlie took her hand. "Come on," he said.

"It's wonderful."

She laughed.

"What's the matter?" asked Charlie. "Has he——"

"No," she said. "He's asleep—up in the cottage."

"And you won't go in," said Charlie, "and dance?"

"No."

"Some other time, then," said Charlie, and laughed.

## *The Crazy Fool*

"Some other time," she repeated.

Charlie kissed her on the forehead, put on his mask, and went on into the Lodge, leaving her standing there.

It was just five minutes of twelve.

"Take your partners for the Grand March," came the call. Charlie turned and saw a masked girl with a beautiful Venetian costume coming down the stairs as though she had just arrived. On impulse, he walked up to her and spoke.

"Will you be my partner?" he asked, "for the Grand March?"

She put her arm through his without answering, and they walked in. Charlie looked for Mr. King but did not see him. The march began.

Napoleon had returned and was seated in the judge's box. Beside him sat an elderly gentleman, heavily masked, in the costume of a Doge of Venice.

"I wonder who that is," said Charlie, and  
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then he discovered Mr. King. Mr. King was over with the orchestra, leading it, and at the same time, playing the saxophone, and having the time of his life.

"Excuse me a minute," said Charlie. "I want to find out something," and he left his partner standing and ran toward Mr. King. But just as he reached the orchestra, there came a long loud roll of the drum, followed by a crash of the cymbals, the lights went out and when they came on again, the clocks began to strike twelve.

Every one stopped where they were and counted aloud. At the last stroke, there was another roll of the drum and Mr. King leaped on a chair.

"Everybody unmask," he cried. "Everybody."

The unmasking began. And then Charlie noticed three men stealthily sneaking toward the door.

"Stop!" he cried. "Stop those men!" and

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## *The Crazy Fool*

he started for them. The three, still masked, raced for the door. The lights went out. Charlie dived. There was a crash—a scream. And then Charlie's voice saying, "All right, boys—let's have a light."

Some one struck a match.

There sat Charlie, on top of the three men, calmly eating an apple. Charlie had not forgotten his old Harvard football days.

The lights went on again and Charlie dragged his prisoners to their feet and pulled off their masks in front of the judge's box.

"Ah," he said, "I thought so. Jack Butterfield, my rival for the hand of Judith. You, Jack—an agitator! I am surprised! What can have brought you to this?"

"Loose women," replied Jack, hanging his head, "and drink. And dope. And association with evil companions. And cards. And race track gambling. And fast automobiles. And bad books. And evil photographs. And the drama. And——"

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## *The Crazy Fool*

"Stop!" cried Charlie. "You have been punished enough. You shall go free, and I, for one, shall never breathe a word of your disgrace."

"Thank you, Hatch," said Butterfield. "I'll never forget this. You're a man," and in utter silence he walked the length of the hall and out into a new and, let us hope, better life.

"Can we go, too, mister?" asked one of the agitators. "My old mother's waiting for me with a candle in the window."

"My mother's got two candles," said the other agitator.

"My mother's got a dozen candles," replied the first, "and some property in Brooklyn in her own name."

"My mother——"

"Stop!"

It was the distinguished elderly gentleman, still masked, in the judge's box. "Those two men," he said, "are notorious bank robbers."

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## *The Crazy Fool*

They are wanted for robbing the Pratt National Bank of New York City, of which I—" and he slowly took off his mask, "am president and chairman of the Board of Directors."

"Mr. Pratt!" exclaimed Charlie. "By all that's holy!"

"Charlie, my boy," said Mr. Pratt. "My hand. There is a large reward for these men—dead or alive."

"Alive, please!" put in one of the robbers.

"Silence," said Mr. Pratt, giving them a contemptuous look.

"And have I made good, sir?" asked Charlie.

Mr. Pratt smiled. "My boy," he said, "you have."

"Thank God!" cried Charlie, and a great cheer went up from the crowd.

And then there was a stir—an aisle was opened—and down the aisle came the girl in the Venetian dress who had been Charlie's partner for the Grand March.

## *The Crazy Fool*

When she reached Charlie, she stopped and bowed gracefully and held out her hand to be kissed. Charlie took the hand and bent over it. When he looked up, the girl had removed her mask.

"Judith!" he cried, for it was she.

"And now," said Mr. Pratt, "we must dance in honor of your engagement."

"This is the happiest moment of my life," cried Charlie. "Everybody is so grand and everybody's so happy." And he looked over the dance floor at the faces of the people he knew—Napoleon, the Chairman—Don Quixote. "Oh, God—I'm so happy, too," and he took Judith in his arms, after asking her permission for a dance.

The orchestra started—and then suddenly outside there was a muffled explosion and a sudden flare-up of red against the sky. Everybody stopped.

"Well, what do you know about that!" said one of the robbers. "It finally went off."

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## *The Crazy Fool*

Charlie grabbed him. "What do you mean?"

"No harm—guv'nor," said the man, cringing. "It's just a bomb we put under the cottage this afternoon."

"It was set," explained the other, "for eight o'clock, but when it didn't go off, we forgot all about it."

"The cottage is burning," cried a man at the door.

"Thank goodness there is nobody in it," said another, and the music began again.

And then, through the dancers, came weaving a woman. It was Mrs. Barbee. Charlie saw the look on her face and stopped.

"Charlie," she said, quietly. "He's in there. Burning up. And I love him—I always will love him."

Charlie smiled and took Judith in his arms and kissed her. "I'll be right back," he said and ran out before she could stop him. "I've

## *The Crazy Fool*

got to see a fellow about some fire insurance," he called over his shoulder.

Mrs. Barbee made a move to steady herself by taking Judith's arm, Judith withdrew her hand and walked alone to the box where her father was sitting. Mrs. Barbee stood there in the midst of the dancers until Mr. King saw her, came up and took her away.

The dance went on—wilder and wilder. The orchestra seemed to be breathing, panting, crying, something into the souls of these breathing, panting, crying people until the pain and joy became almost unbearable.

Judith and Mr. Pratt in one box, Mrs. Barbee and Mr. King in another, waited.

The flames of the dance suddenly flared up to a moment of brilliant ecstatic heat—a flash of pure white light which blinded every one—and then as suddenly, sank down into nothingness.

"It's over," said Mrs. Barbee, and she began to cry.

## *The Crazy Fool*

Some one at the door called out something.

"What did he say, father?" asked Judith.

"He said," replied her father, "that the cottage had gone."

Judith took her father's hand and sat there.

"The crazy fool," she said, "the crazy fool."

And Mr. King looked up from Mrs. Barbee's face and gazed around the room at the faces of the people he knew—Napoleon, the Chairman, Don Quixote, Tristan, Cleopatra, and all——

And stroking Mrs. Barbee's hand, slowly, with his old knotted fingers, he addressed a remark to no one in particular.

"The lucky fool," he said. "The lucky fool."

THE END

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